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Disclaimer

I want you all to know that I did change some possessions (which Starclan cat is possessing which clan cat). Please don't point them out, I am aware of it and so are the other authors.
Also if you see any description changes of certain cats we are aware of that too.
Also want to say if you see any typos please be mature and don't point them out. The reason I say this is because it spams in the comments and I don't want to see a notification telling me someone commented and all it was is that person telling me I typed something wrong (and most of the time I am writting these stories on my phone, so its going to be common that I hit the wrong letter and miss it when I read it a second time).
But anyway scroll onward and I hope you enjoy the final book!
And please also remember this is an alternate universe story, so some things won't be the same as what was going on in the original series.

Thunderclan

Thunderclan

Leader: Greystar - Grey tom with amber eyes

Deputy: Snowstrike (**Snowfur**) - White tabby she-cat with blue eyes

Medicine Cat: Snowpoppy - White she-cat with blue eyes

Apprentice: Sunscar

Warriors:

Featherwind (**Feathertail**) - Silver tabby she-cat with blue eyes
Apprentice: Acornpaw
Runningwish - Brown tabby she-cat with green eyes and a golden paw
Apprentice: Seapaw
Lionpelt - Golden tabby she-cat with blue eyes
Apprentice: Rainpaw
Rednose - Dark orange tom with amber eyes
Vineclaw - Light brown tom with green eyes
Willowbelly (**Willowbreeze**) - Light grey she-cat with amber eyes
Voleeye - Dusty brown tom with blue eyes
Shrewstep - White and black tom with amber eyes
Lilyflower - Tortoiseshell she-cat with amber eyes
Apprentice: Softpaw
Ivyheart - Tortoiseshell she-cat with blue eyes
Heatherear - Golden tabby she-cat with green eyes
Cheetahstep - Golden she-cat with black spots covering her pelt and blue eyes
Apprentice: Patchpaw
Barkfur - Large dusty brown tabby tom with golden eyes
Firesong (**Firestar**) - Ginger tom with green eyes
Ashwing (**Ashfoot**) - Grey and white she-cat with amber eyes
Apprentice: Owlpaw
Ravenscar (**Bluestar**) - Black and white she-cat with a scar on her

cheek
Apprentice: Rosepaw
Sandfeather (**Sandstorm**) - Pale ginger she-cat with green eyes
Apprentice: Foxpaw
Longfrost (**Longtail**) - Black tom with white paws and amber eyes
Mousepelt - Dusky brown she-cat and amber eyes
Apprentice: Winterpaw

Cats of Dusk and Dawn:

Lionblaze - Golden brown tabby tom with gold eyes
Jayfeather - Mottled pale grey tabby tom with blind blue eyes

Apprentices:

Rainpaw - Dark grey tom with green eyes

Winterpaw - Light brown tabby she-cat with blue eyes

Owlpaw - Brown furred tom with golden streaks on his muzzle and dark green eyes

Foxpaw - Wild orange furred tom with amber eyes

Seapaw - She-cat with black fur with white socked legs and light blue eyes

Rosepaw - Black and gold she-cat with blue eyes orange splotch over her left eye and tail

Acornpaw - Tom with wild golden fur and black splotches on his back legs and green eyes

Patchpaw - She-cat with a mixture of black, greys, and golds over her pelt and amber eyes

Softpaw - Pale grey furred she-cat with light blue eyes

Queens:

Spottedlegs - Tortoiseshell she-cat with amber eyes
Leaftail - Tortoiseshell she-cat with amber eyes

Elders:

Dewnose - Grey tom with amber eyes
Amberfur - Pale grey and white she-cat with amber eyes
Hawkpath - Orange she-cat with amber eyes

Bloodclan:

Leader(s):

Tiny (**Scourge**) - Small black tom with ice blue eyes and a white paw

Smear - Tortoiseshell she-cat with gold eyes

Goddess - White and gold she-cat with golden eyes

Second Command: Tim - Large tan tom with amber eyes

Scouts:

Walt - Light blue tom with amber eyes
Gouge - Black she-cat with green eyes
Squid - Small she-cat with light blue fur and dark blue eyes

Runners:

Christopher - Large brown tom with amber eyes
Taz - Large black tom with green eyes
Sam - Tan tom with blue eyes

Shadowclan Rebels:

Swiftrise
Sootwhisker
Frostlight
-Birdpaw
-Needlepaw
-Toadpaw
Pinecloud
Honeyspots
Crowbird(**Crowfeather**)

Nightstep (**Nightstar**)
Littlefoot
Thrushshadow
Splashheart
Spiderheart
-Dapplepaw
-Rowanpaw
Smokewind

Striped Savage Book 4

Shadowclan

Leader: Thistlestar (**Thistleclaw**) - Brown she-cat with green eyes

Deputy: Brokenleaf (**Brokentail**) - Large tabby tom with amber eyes

Medicine Cat: Longleaf - Grey and black tabby she-cat with green eyes

Warriors:

Frogleg - Black tom with green eyes
Blackeye - Black tom with a green eye and almost black eye
  Apprentice: Mistpaw
Roseear (**Russetfur**) - Dark red and brown she-cat with amber eyes
Blackcloud - Black tom with blue eyes
Thornleap - Orange tom with amber eyes
  Apprentice: Fogpaw
Snaketail - Dark brown tabby she-cat with green eyes
Tallstump - Grey tom with amber eyes

Apprentices:

Mistpaw - Grey she-cat with green eyes
Fogpaw - Dark brown tabby tom with amber eyes

Elders:

Darkear - Dark brown tabby she-cat with green eyes

Striped Savage Book 4

Windclan

Leader: Rabbitstar - Grey and white tom with blue eyes

Deputy: Mousefern (**Mousefur**) - Dusty brown she-cat with green eyes

Medicine Cat: Mudpool - Brown tom with green eyes

Warriors:

Darkfur - Black tabby she-cat with green eyes
Mudfang - Dark brown tom with blue eyes
Breezewhisker (**Breezepelt**) - White tom with amber eyes
Raindrop (**Rainstorm**) - Grey she-cat with blue eyes
Squirrelnose (**Squirrelflight**) - Light brown she-cat with green eyes
Tallwish (**Tallstar**) - Black and grey tom with blue eyes
  Apprentice: Burpaw
Nightsky (**Nightcloud**) - Dark grey she-cat with amber eyes
Icepath - White and brown tom with amber eyes
  Apprentice: Blossompaw
Littlelegs - Small white and black tom with amber eyes
  Apprentice: Whitepaw
Fernshade - White and black she-cat with amber eyes
Gorsepelt - Grey she-cat with green eyes
Flamepelt - Dark brown tom with green eyes
Dustfeather (**Dustpelt**) - Dark brown tom with green eyes
  Apprentice: Gingerpaw
Fawntail - Tan brown tabby she-cat with amber eyes
Morninglight - Light brown she-cat with blue eyes
  Apprentice: Birchpaw

Apprentices:

Whitepaw - White she-cat with amber eyes
Gingerpaw - Ginger tom with green eyes

Birchpaw - Grey tabby tom with amber eyes
Blossompaw - Tan she-cat with blue eyes
Burpaw - Black tom with amber eyes

Queens:

Daisywhisker - White she-cat with green eyes

Elders:

Dawnnose - Brown tabby she-cat with golden eyes
Nightwillow - Black she-cat with blue eyes

Striped Savage Book 4

Riverclan

Leader: Pebblestar - Black tom with green eyes

Deputy: Hawkclaw (**Hawkfrost**) - Brown tabby tom with blue eyes

Medicine Cat: Tawnywish (**Tawnypelt**) - Brown she-cat with blue eyes

Apprentice: Bramblefrost (**Bramblestar**)

Warriors:

Bluewillow -Bluish furred she-cat with blue eyes
Blazetail - Brown tabby tom with green eyes
Crabclaw - Gold and ginger tom with green eyes
Silversky (**Silverstream**) - Silver tabby she-cat with amber eyes
Surgewhisker - Golden and brown tom with grey feet and green eyes
  Apprentice: Puddlepaw
Brightfeather (**Brightheart**) - Gold she-cat with amber eyes
  Apprentice: Hollowpaw
Fishfall - Bluish furred tom with amber eyes
Leapardtail - Golden tabby she-cat with green eyes
Oakstream (**Oakheart**) - Dark brown tom with blue eyes
Stonebird - Grey tom with green eyes
Crookentooth -White tortoiseshell tom with blue eyes and a sideways tooth
Barktail - Brown tabby tom with blue eyes
  Apprentice: Birdpaw
Greyclaw (**Greystripe**) - Grey tom with green eyes
Mothstrike - White and black she-cat with green eyes
Whitepelt - White she-cat with a silver foot and amber eyes

Apprentices:

Birdpaw - Black she-cat with green eyes
Hollowpaw - White tom with amber eyes
Puddlepaw - White she-cat with amber eyes

Queens:

Rippleshine - Gold and white she-cat with blue eyes
Mistynose - Grey she-cat with a silvered muzzle and amber eyes

Elders:

Frostfang (**Frostfur**) - White she-cat with blue eyes

Prologue

Runningwish sat outside the medicine cat den. Cheetahstep was staying inside. Snowpoppy had determined that Cheetahstep had done more damage to her paw then they thought, the golden and black spotted warrior wouldn't be able to leave for a while. Runningwish knew Cheetahstep was distraught about that news, she was excited to train an apprentice and now she wouldn't be able to do so until Snowpoppy believed she was sturdy enough to walk and run.
Greystar had addressed the issue by going to speak with Cheetahstep. By his order someone else was going to take over Patchpaw's training. Barkfur had caught wind of it and volunteered to take her place.
Runningwish sighed and got up from her spot by the entrance to Snowpoppy's den. She smiled as she spotted Seapaw and her siblings all surrounding Ravenscar, who had been taken over by Bluestar, giving her looks of wonder. Winterpaw and Rainpaw were with them too, not sure what to think of their mother now that a Starclan cat was occupying her.
Suddenly two toms burst into camp. In their rush, Runningwish realized it was Lionblaze and Jayfeather. They both got into the medicine cat den and Runningwish knew they had surprised Snowpoppy when she heard rustling and a little squeal.

Chapter 1

The brown tabby padded up into Snowpoppy's den and saw Lionblaze fretting over his daughter and Jayfeather demanding to know what Snowpoppy had done for treatment. Cheetahstep sighed. "I'm fine. Calm down, the both of you. Its just a sprain. I will just have to wait a while to start walking on it again." Cheetahstep said. Runningwish chuckled and Cheetahstep looked at her with a bit of embarrassment.
"They can be protective." The golden she-cat said with a smile. Jayfeather growled.
"We have to be, especially now of all times. Firestar comes back and the Dark Forest is rising again, and now you end up in a state where you can't even walk on your own? Do you know how dangerous this is?" Jayfeather demanded. Lionblaze hushed his brother.
"Of course we will worry for you. We're family. And what Jayfeather said is true, if Thistleclaw striked now you wouldn't be able to defend yourself." Lionblaze said. Runningwish stepped in.
"Well if what is said about you is true, Lionblaze, you can't lose a fight so if you stayed with Cheetahstep she would be rather safe." The brown tabby said. Lionblaze sighed.
"I cannot lose a battle, sure, but that doesn't mean someone I am trying to protect is in the fight. She could still get hurt." The gold tom said back. Runningwish looked down at her paws. He was right about that.
After a few more arguements, Lionblaze and Jayfeather left Snowpoppy's den. Runningwish had left to fetch some food for Cheetahstep and the medicine cat.
She paused, lifting up two mice, when she saw Barkfur talking to Patchpaw. She felt uneasy watching them for some reason.
The tabby shook herself and headed back to the den.

Chapter 2

Tigertooth stopped. Goldensky looked up at him with worry.
"What is it?" She asked quietly. The large tom narrowed his eyes as he looked around them. They were on their way to a thunderpath so they could cross into a two-leg area.
He heard something. Tigertooth felt something in the back of his mind trying to pry itself free but he ignored it for now.
"Nothing. We need to keep walking." Tigertooth said. Goldensky nodded and followed closely after her mate.
Sunscar trotted after Firestar. His illuminated pelt was hard to loose in the wilderness and she was thankful for that.
He was fast, like he didn't get tired, and Sunscar was having a hard time getting past all the tree roots and bushes that got in their way.
Firestar glanced over his shoulder at her occassionally, probably to check if she was still there. She had been doing her best to scan every new opening they came across, trying to see if there were any traces of Tigertooth.
She would see glimpses of what looked like black fire on leafs here and there, as if his pelt had brushed against them.
She didn't think she had to worry to much about it though, keeping track of where Tigertooth was going that is. Firestar seemed to be tracking him by scent on his own and had Sunscar along for the ride.
"Tigerstar is trying to take over..." Firestar said. Sunscar glanced at him.
"How do you know?" She asked. Firestar looked back at her.
"His scent is getting stronger." Firestar said, he looked back in front of him and narrowed his eyes.
Tigerstar wouldn't be very willing at first. He worried he might try to attack him, he didn't want to risk Sunscar or Firesong's body getting harmed before the battle started.
He paused and slowed his pace. Sunscar caught up.
"Did we catch up with him?" Sunscar asked. Firestar slowly shook his head.
"I was surprised by Goldensky's scent. I forgot she was with him." Firestar said and picked up pace again. Sunscar was a bit

dissapointed but fell in behind him.
"Do you know anything about your mother?" Firestar asked. Sunscar blinked.
"Not anything more then what Runningwish has told me." She said.
"And what has she told you?" He persisted.
"She.. was lively..? Runningwish told me she never seemed to run out of energy." Sunscar said, watching Firestar's tail sway in front of her face.
"What about her and Tigertooth's relationship?" The ginger tom asked, leaping over a few fallen branches. Sunscar ran around them and walked beside Firestar.
"Well all I have ever heard is Goldensky loved him. Enough to go into excile with him." The gold she-cat shrugged.
"I don't really know how they fell in love." Firestar nodded and glanced at her.
"Love is powerful. I don't know how some cats end up falling for each other, but it seems she is rather commited to him. And Sunscar, don't let anyone tell you that is a bad thing." Firestar said. She looked up at him and saw a wistfulness in his eyes as if he was reliving a memory of his life.

Chapter 3

Runningwish trotted over to the apprentice den.
"Seapaw!" Runningwish called. The black she-cat apprentice turned to look at her mentor. She seperated herself from the group.
"Yes?" She asked.
"I'm going to take you hunting." Runningwish purred. Seapaw smiled brightly. She turned to her siblings.
"I'm going hunting!" She called out in excitement. Her siblings started cheering for her and Runningwish chuckled. She and Seapaw walked out into the forest together.
"Are you supposed to hunt mice differently then you would hunt a bird?" Seapaw asked. Runningwish glanced at the the black apprentice.
"With mice you always want to be slow and steady, but fast enough that you catch them before they run off on their own. With birds it takes a little more stealth and quickness." Runningwish explained. Seapaw nodded.
"So what am I going to hunt?" She asked. Runningwish chuckled.
"Whatever we find first." The brown tabby stopped and turned to Seapaw.
"This is a hunting crouch. The first step in hunting." Runningwish lowered herself to the ground. Seapaw mimicked her.
"Step two, you move your paws lightly so you don't alert what you're going after." Runningwish said, moving her paws carefully. Seapaw watched her and copied. Runningwish straightened and nodded to her with approval.
"Now lets go find an unlucky target." Runningwish teased. Seapaw grinned and followed after her mentor.
The brown she-cat stopped when she had caught the scent of a bird. Runningwish glanced back at her apprentice and tilted her head, signaling to her that there was prey nearby.
Seapaw smelled the air. She scented the black bird and got into her crouch. She went a little farther before pouncing at it.
The bird panicked and tried to get away but Seapaw struck out and caught it. She killed it and glanced back at her mentor.
Runningwish bowed her head.

"Great job." She praised. Seapaw smiled.
"Can we keep hunting?" She asked, dropping the bird in front of Runningwish.
"I don't see why not. The more fresh-kill the better, right?" The tabby joked.

Chapter 4

Patchpaw watched Seapaw and Runningwish leave. She glanced around camp and spotted Barkfur, her substitute mentor while Cheetahstep was being kept in the medicine cat den. The young she-cat glanced around again and spotted Rainpaw and Winterpaw. She trotted over to them.
"Have you learned to hunt yet?" Patchpaw asked, sitting down with them. Winterpaw smiled in greeting.
"Yeah. Mousepelt took me hunting a few times and on a patrol." She glanced at her brother. Rainpaw had been keeping an eye on the medicine cat den, but was brought out of it by his sister nudging him.
"What?" He asked curiously. Patchpaw and Winterpaw chuckled at him.
"You mouse brain! Patchpaw asked if we had learned to hunt yet. Has Lionpelt taken you on a patrol or anything?" The light brown she-cat asked. Rainpaw nodded.
"Yeah. The first day of being her apprentice she took me into the forest and taught me to hunt immediately." Rainpaw said. Patchpaw tilted her head at him.
"Huh. I guess that means you've had the most experience then. Wait, you know what we should do?" Patchpaw's eyes lit up as she got an idea. Winterpaw leaned in with a grin, Patchpaw's enthusiasm rubbing off on her.
"We should all go hunting together!" Patchpaw suggested.
"You mean us three or all the apprentices?" Rainpaw asked.
"The three of us!" Patchpaw giggled at him. Winterpaw glanced behind them towards the warriors den.
"Don't we need one of our mentors with us or something?" Winterpaw asked. Patchpaw spotted Barkfur again.
"We can just ask Barkfur. I'm sure he would go with us." Rainpaw and Winterpaw smiled at the mention of their father. They had nearly forgotten he was taking Cheetahstep's place while she was healing.
"Thats a great idea! We can show him what we've learned." Rainpaw agreed. Patchpaw smiled proudly at her idea being

accepted. They ran over to Barkfur and told him what they had in mind. The large tom agreed and lead them out into the forest.

Swiftrise, a Shadowclan rebel, watched the group leave. He couldn't help overhearing them. He was sitting beside his friend Smokewind.
"I'm still worried these Thunderclan cats might turn on us." Smokewind muttered. Swiftrise scoffed at him.
"What reason do they have to do that? Why would they want to wipe out Shadowclan?" The tom asked. Smokewind was silent a moment.
"Because we are the ones who always create or bring trouble to the other clans." He responded. Swiftrise paused and sighed. He didn't have a strong argument against that since it was true. Shadowclan had brought many burdens upon the other clans and he honestly could see himself opposing Shadowclan if he weren't apart of it.
"Well they're helping us, letting us stay here. That says something." He finally said. Smokewind sighed.
"They wont let us leave and they never let us hunt. All we do is sit here like volunteer prisoners. You need to talk to Greystar and get him to trust us." Smokewind said. Swiftrise shifted his jaw.
"We can't just demand to be treated as equals in their clan. We're supposed to be against each other and I don't want to ruin this safe shelter because you want to kill their prey in their forest. And we have newly made apprentices. We don't even know these woods. We could get lost." Swiftrise added. Smokewind rolled his eyes and huffed.
"Whatever you say, Swiftstar." The black tom replied smartly. Swiftrise swatted him.
"Stop calling me that!" He said chuckling.

Chapter 5

Goldensky was finding it to be more and more difficult to travel as the sun lowered out of sight. Tigertooth had given her curious glances, not sure of what was happening with her. She kept tripping over things and ran into others.
Tigertooth sighed. Maybe she was just tired. They had been traveling for two days straight with barely any sleep. He felt guilt pinch at him. He shouldn't be pushing her so hard to keep up with him.
He sighed under his breath and slowed pace for his mate to have an easier time keeping up.
Stop.. rest...
Tigertooth froze in his tracks. What was that? Who was that? He turned his ears in every direction in search of sound from possibly another cat. Goldensky stood beside him with worry.
"What is it?" She asked quietly. Tigertooth took a long moment before replying.
"I thought I heard a voice." Tigertooth admitted. The golden she-cat tilted her head at him with confusion. She hadn't heard anything. She was going to speak again, but her mate spoke first.
"We need to find somewhere to stop." He said, resuming to walk forward. Goldensky followed after him, doing her best not to fall behind as she had earlier.
They found a strange tunnel, one that led down into a small but big enough space for the both of them to huddle together in. Tigertooth went inside and sniffed around. Whatever had been their originally had left long ago.
He gave Goldensky the okay to come in and he sat closest to the exit to keep an eye open for potential threats.
His mate curled up beside him and fell into a deep and well deserved sleep.

Sunscar and Firestar had made progress with their search for the exciled duo. They had slept the night before and were determined to keep traveling throughout the night and sleep the next morning to make consistent progress.

Sunscar kept her ears open and searched with both of her eyes. They had found more evidence of Tigerstar, or Tigertooth, on their journey tonight. Firestar felt more and more determined every time they found bits of Tigertooth and Goldensky's trail.
He knew they were getting close. He could feel it in his gut. Sunscar felt the same way and was a bit conflicted inside.
When they catch up to them she would get to meet her parents, but she had no idea what they were like. She didn't want to believe what everyone said about her father and wanted more from her mother.
But she feared what had been said was true. What if her father was just some tyrant that wanted to rule the clan and Goldensky was only a hopeless romantic? Or even worse.. he tricked her into it.
She also wanted to know why her mother left her with Runningwish and Voleeye. Why couldn't she be with them? Even if they were trying to escape the clans, she would've had her parents.
She shook herself mentally. She had to be passive about this. It might be the best option since she had no idea what to expect. Maybe her father was kind and just lost his grip on reality because of Tigerstar, and maybe Goldensky truely did love her father and was very loyal and faithful to him.. enough to the point where she would leave with him like she did.
She took a deep breath to clear her head. Sunscar had a hard time trying to stop thinking about it but that curiousity always burned in her since she was a kit and now it was reignited since she had the opportunity to meet them now.
Firestar halted and raised his head.
"We've caught them." He announced to her in a hushed voice.

Chapter 6

Tiny stood by himself with his clan. He had asked Greystar if he could move his clan to a seperate part of the forest, the tom had agreed and Tiny had a small camp set up for them.
He had been drastically effected by the awakening of Scourge in his mind. Instead of being like the others where he was being controlled by the spirit that he hosted, Scourge was a physical illusion that only he could see.
He looked like a black shadow with his white paw glowing with blinding light. Tiny didn't understand why it glowed when the rest of him was as black as a starless night.
Scourge circled him silently and Tiny ignored him to supervise the two dens being made by his warriors. Smear had dissapeared some time ago.
The small black tom found it hard to keep track of time for some reason. He finally eyed the darker, bigger, figure of himself. Was this spirit the reason he wasn't feeling like himself? Was he trying to toy with him?
Tiny was going to speak up to the ghost but paused as he realized how insane he would look if he started talking to something his clanmates couldn't see.
"Tim, I am going to go meet with Greystar to ask him something. Make sure everything here continues." Tiny ordered. Tim looked up at his leader and nodded.
With that the Bloodclan leader left and walked into the forest with the shadow still stalking him. He felt uneasy, as if he were being viewed as prey by Scourge's ghost.
Only when he was sure he was far enough away that his clanmates couldn't hear him did he stop to address Scourge.
"What do you want?" Tiny demanded. Scourge stopped circling him. His ear twtiched and he turned to look at Tiny.
"I want this body.. but Firestar wont let me take it..." Scourge admitted. He sat down and narrowed his eyes at his host. Tiny mimicked him and they just barely looked like reflections of each other.
"Why do you want to possess me? The prophecy that Leaffern or

Dovewing, whatever she wants to be called, told me didn't involve you. It said **I** and Greystar would watch a bloody battle, not Scourge and Greystar..." Tiny said. Scourge chuckled.
"What if we are the same? No difference, equals of the mind?" Scourge asked. Tiny frowned.
"I am not a cold blooded murderer." Tiny said. Scourge chuckled.
"Yet what does my Bloodclan do now to survive? What will you be doing during this upcoming "bloody battle"? You will be murdering warriors you know nothing about. Look at you now, working with cats you don't know." Scourge taunted. Tiny growled.
"Yet you were the one who stupidly partnered himself with the one who caused you to go down a dark path." He retorted. The shadow hesitated with a reply. It had hit him deeply.
"The enemy of my enemy is my friend." Scourge said after a while. Tiny smirked at him.
"You only created more enemies by killing Tigerstar on the spot. You're foolish. I'm not like you at all." Tiny shot back. Scourge grinned.
"We have many differences but look now, you're taking pleasure in making me look bad. You left out my greater accomplishments. I killed Firestar, even if Starclan brought him back. I nearly took over that forest and I had a clan at my back." Scourge said. Tiny shot up and shook his head.
"This clan was never at your back! You ruled through fear and cruelty! Even if you gave refuge you didn't care for them! If I am you then I am the better you, the improved you. I will not be a tyrant to my clanmates. I am their leader, not their master." Tiny snarled. Scourge nodded slowly. The white of his paw slowly crept a little further up his shadowed body.
"I hope you continue to create a new reputation for Bloodclan..." Scourge said.
"I will come to you again when I feel it is right. Maybe for more talks of greatness." Scourge said before dissipitating. Tiny blinked and looked around him. What did he mean when he would "feel it is right"?
Tiny walked to the Thunderclan camp. He wasn't looking forward to seeing Scourge again.

Chapter 7

Firestar had crept through the area and spotted the entrance to a small, hidden, cave. He smelled the strong scent of Tigerstar inside mixed with his host and Goldensky.
Sunscar had hidden in a bush not far away. He ordered for her to wait there just incase Tigertooth rebelled.
Tigertooth's ear twitched and he rose as best he could in the low ceiled cave. He used his tail to stir Goldensky from her sleep. He smelled a cat. It was Firepaw's scent. Tigertooth wondered if the apprentice had been made a warrior and was split up from a patrol searching for him.
He felt an itch develop in the back of his mind and tried to ignore it but it became more and more aggrivating and prominent. His pelt lit up with dark shadows and he seemed almost invisible within the darkness of the cave.
His eyes were tiny burning lights of amber.
"Tigerstar! Step out peacefully!" Firestar's call boomed from the entrance. Tigerstar shook his pelt in contempt and glanced at Goldensky who had come back-to. Her eyes widened in shock at Tigertooth's new appearance.
"Tiger-"
"Star. Tiger*star*." He corrected her before she could finish. Tigerstar turned away from her.
"Firestar is here to fight me most likely. Stay down here. He will get you if I lose." Tigerstar said. He padded out of the small gap and appeared to his long time rival.
Firestar stood tall, but not as tall compared to Tigerstar's host.
"What do you want? Are you here to finish me off? Wipe away any other chance of my breath escaping a mouth?" Tigerstar asked.
Firestar eyed him a moment, secretely sizing him up if he tried to attack him.
"No. I'm here to ask for you to join me and the other clans. The Dark Forest is trying to take over again and we need you." Firestar said. Tigerstar gave the orange tom a piercing glare of suspicion.
"Why me? You won't trust me and neither will any of the other clans. I'll be a prisoner you will keep in line. You just want to

capture me so I'm not a risk. Firestar, you can leave. I'm done. I am going away, as far as I can go with Tigertooth and Goldensky. I won't be an issue." Tigerstar said. Firestar's ear twitched curiously. "Why do you want to leave? Why take Goldensky?" The tom asked. Tigerstar hesitated.
"Tigertooth does not deserve to go down the same path I did, he doesn't need to lose every she-cat he has loved because he mistook their value to him and saw his ambition as something greater. I'm helping him and Goldensky lead a new life together..." Tigerstar said. Firestar felt his gaze soften at Tigerstar's unexpected but insighful and noble words.
"This is the Tigerclaw I once wanted to look up to.. you have to join us. We need your help. And we won't keep you a prisoner. I can promise that." Firestar said. The older brown tom sighed.
"Fine." He gave in with that single word and turned towards the small tunnel.
"Goldensky, come out." He called. A golden she-cat appeared and watched Firestar with unease, standing close to Tigerstar even though she didn't know who to trust.
"I'm going to give Tigertooth back. I'll come back later." Tigerstar said. His pelt's fire slowly died down and Tigertooth was back in control. He blinked and spotted Firestar. Tigertooth had heard and seen everything but stepped in front of Goldensky anyway.
"I won't enjoy it, but lead us back to camp." The tom said. Firestar nodded and glanced behind him.
"Sunscar, come out. Its safe." Firestar said. Goldensky's ears perked. Was this her daughter? She could only guess, but that doubt was thrown from her mind as Sunscar stepped out.
The medicine cat apprentice was almost a copy of Goldensky, except for her blind eye.
Oh she wanted to yowl a thanks to Starclan, even though Firestar was right in front of her, for giving her this great opportunity to meet her daughter.
Firestar watched them both. He noticed Goldensky trying to choke down a reaction but Tigertooth looked passive.
"Have you not met your daughter?" Firestar asked the tom. Goldensky's face fell as she remembered Tigertooth hadn't known about Sunscar. He shot Firestar a look of confusion.
"My daughter?" He looked back at Goldensky.

Chapter 8

Sunscar blinked after Tigertooth spoke. Thoughts popped into her head for an explaination. Did he think she died? Did he expect Goldensky to leave her to die? Was Tigertooth not her father? Sunscar's paranoia had been answered after Goldensky finally said something.
"..Yes..." The she-cat answered. Tigertooth eyed her and Sunscar watched in silence. Yes? That was all she had to say? It seemed like her father was more confused then she was.
"You did not have kits." Tigertooth said. Goldensky grew a look of distress.
"I-I didn't tell you about it. I had a litter and Sunki-scar was the only one that survived! I thought-!" Tigertooth cut her off.
"Why didn't you tell me? You gave birth?! On your own?" He roared, the betrayal obvious in his voice. Goldensky was lost for a response. Firestar spoke up.
"I'm sorry to have admitted it before anyone else, but we need to get back to Thunderclan. The clans are in danger." The tom said, letting an intense gaze befall Tigertooth. Tigertooth glared at him and nodded gruffly.
"Then lets return..." He growled. He followed Firestar as the tom started to walk away. Goldensky stood alone with Sunscar nearby. The medicine cat apprentice watched her mother with worry. Goldensky wanted to fall and dwell in her burst of distraught but she knew now was not the time, especially in front of her daughter. She pulled herself together as best she could and started to walk forward.
Sunscar caught up to Firestar and Tigertooth, now looking back occassionally upon her mother to insure she was still there as Firestar had done with her.
They walked for the rest of the night and decided to rest. After dawn broke they had begun moving again to get to camp as fast as possible.
''*'*'*'*'*'*'*'*'*'*'*'*'*'*

Runningwish's ears perked as she heard commotion in camp. She and Seapaw were returning from hunting and tried to get into camp

but a crowd was gathered.
She spotted Sunpaw with Goldensky, Tigertooth, and Firestar. She was going to say a greeting but Cheetahstep cried out from the other side of the crowd. Runningwish smelled the familiar scent of blood. Her eyes widened as horrific images popped into her mind. She circled around the crowd to the edge and gasped at the partially mangled body of an apprentice.
Patchpaw.. no!
Cheetahstep's cry of horror seemed to echo in camp. She broke down in front of Patchpaw's body, bringing it close to her.
"Its all my fault! I should have been there!" She wailed. Lionblaze and Jayfeather watched on with concern. Lionblaze tried to approach her but she rose and ran.
Runningwish moved to stand in her way. They both paused and looked at each other. Runningwish could see in her eyes that her heart had shattered, the devestation and guilt of losing her apprentice was starting to build up.
The brown tabby froze up and Cheetahstep ran past her. Runningwish gained control of her limbs again and turned to chase after her but a tom ran in front of her.
"Let me help her." He said. She caught a glimpse of him before he disappeared beyond the ferns. It was Swiftrise from the Shadowclan rebels. She was so confused and then realized who was missing.

Chapter 9

"Where is Barkfur?" Runningwish called. The group turned to her with saddened expressions. Heatherear, Longfrost, and their kits all surrounded Patchpaw in mourning. Longfrost's pelt died down. The spirit, Longtail, had stopped possessing him and he laid beside his mate with his head lowered.
Runningwish was receiving no explaination and she felt tension build inside her, a desperate need to know if this was one of her visions that she had long ago.
Sunscar had pulled away from the group and found Runningwish. The tabby looked over her.
"What happened?" She asked. Sunscar was obviously upset and in mourning.
"I killed Patchpaw." Runningwish blinked at her in shock.
"What..?" She asked. Sunscar choked on her words.
"Patchpaw was dying. I didn't know what else to do! I fed her a death berry to make it easier for her! Runningwish, she was in so much pain!" The medicine cat apprentice lowered herself to the ground and covered her head with her paws, whimpering softly.
Runningwish understood what happened. The vision that frightened her so terribly wasn't of *her* feeding a cat a death berry, she had a vision of *Sunscar* giving the berry to Patchpaw as she died. She felt sick to her stomach.
She wanted to ask more but Sunscar seemed to be in shock just as much as she was. She instead got her to stand up and took her to Snowpoppy's den.

Cheetahstep had run through the forest without a planned route. She wasn't in the proper condition to think clearly and she was limping due to her injury.
She had been stepping out of the medicine cat den to try and exercise her foot under Jayfeather's order and thats when it happened.
They brought Patchpaw's body into camp. Cheetahstep stopped when her paws hit deep water and she scurried back onto dry land. She had made her way to the edge of the lake somehow.

She collapsed from her despair. She should have been there to protect Patchpaw! It was because of her the apprentice died! She could have been stronger, she could have been there if she didn't let her injury be an excuse!
Cheetahstep's ears twitched instinctively as someone approached. She could care less at the moment what Runningwish had to say to try and make her feel better.
She went to look up at her friend but only saw a brown tom looking down at her.

Chapter 10

She turned away from him. She knew he was one of the Shadowclan rebels but she didn't know why he was here. He sat down beside her. He was quiet and so was she.
He cleared his throat before speaking.
"I know what you're going through right now. And I just wanted to offer some help." He said. Cheetahstep glanced at him with confusion.
"You've had your apprentice's body dragged into your camp? And it was your fault?" She asked, a bit of venom hidden in her words. He shook his head.
"My apprentice was killed in front of me. And I did nothing. I was.. to afraid to do anything. Runningpaw was so brave, I'm so proud of her for standing up against Thistlestar... Runningpaw spoke out against Thistlestar and was stricken down. Just.. dead. I saw her fall down and.. seeing her body... She was always so full of life and-and always tried to do right by her clanmates..." He paused, as if to keep his emotions in control. Cheetahstep waited in patient silence for him to continue.
"My apprentice died. And it was my fault. I could have stepped in, had my life taken instead of hers... But I didn't. The difference between our losses, Cheetahstep, is I had an option. You had no way or ability to help Patchpaw. I know you would have if you were there to stop whatever happened. Don't cry because you think its your fault. Don't blame yourself. I'm sure Patchpaw knows, as she sits in Starclan, that you aren't the one who is responsible." Swiftrise said. Cheetahstep took a deep breath to calm down a bit. She looked away from him.
"But I-I wanted to be a mentor. I wanted to teach her how to be a warrior, I wanted to be her friend..." Cheetahstep admitted. The tom eyed her.
"Well I'm Swiftrise and I'll be here. I know you have an entire clan to help you, but sometimes if there is a time you need someone else to go to.. I can be there for you. If you want, that is." Swiftrise offered. Cheetahstep blinked and nodded slowly, still keeping her gaze off of him.

"Thank you, Swiftrise." He smiled gently at her. He blinked as the sun came from behind the clouds and her pelt lit up. She was practically glowing and he smiled again. Starclan had shown him a new path to follow.
The tom and she-cat sat together for a while until Swiftrise convinced her to return to camp

Chapter 11

Runningwish had finally been told the story. It was only given away when Rainpaw and Winterpaw came back into camp. They told the clan they had been hunting with Patchpaw and their father. Suddenly though a band of three foxes raced through the forest where they were chasing prey. Barkfur had rushed everyone under tree roots that had enough room for them to huddle together. Patchpaw had realised they wouldnt be able to survive three foxes, so she ran out from the safety of the roots to bait them away, and two of the foxes chased after her. Barkfur did his best and tried to attack the last fox but he died when the fox thrust its paw into their spot and cut open Barkfur's throat with its long claws.
Barkfur though, with his last ounce of strength, caught the fox in the eye and it ran off. Rainpaw and Winterpaw cowered behind their father and watched the whole ordeal.
It only got worse though. The two apprentices had been to stiff with shock to move and sat there, looking at their father's body with horror.
They started to hear voices in the distance and Firestar, Tigertooth, Goldensky, amd Sunscar had come to their rescue. They first found Patchpaw after the foxes were done with her. She had barely been grasping onto life when Sunscar found her through the stench of blood.
Sunscar ended her misery by giving her a death berry. Before that though Patchpaw told them where Rainpaw and Winterpaw were. So the group hurried to find them.
The apprentices refused to move from under the roots and claimed they wouldn't until their mother was there.
They brought Patchpaw's body to camp and told Ravenscar what happened. The she-cat ran out of camp and Runningwish guessed that the same thing that happened with Longfrost happened to her. Runningwish had been sitting with the others in memorial for Patchpaw but her ears became alert when she heard Ravenscar returning with her dead mate and her children.
She had lost her connection with Bluestar's spirit just as Longfrost lost his connection with Longtail. Runningwish watched the older

warrior with grief. These cats didn't deserve to die. Barkfur had been a friend to Runningwish and Patchpaw was so young.
The brown tabby sighed heavily and went to comfort Ravenscar.
Not much later Cheetahstep returned with Swiftrise. She saw Barkfur and she seemed to be crestfallen. Two brave and loving cats lost in the same day.
Runningwish looked around and spotted Sunscar. She had an unreadable expression as she looked down at Patchpaw. This apprentice was her sibling. Even if she wasn't born by Heatherear and Longfrost, they raised her as their own.
She had joined all the others, Owlpaw, Softpaw, Acornpaw, and Seapaw to mourn.

Chapter 12

Thistlestar, the herald of Thistleclaw, sat in her den physically alone. Mentally she had a partner who never stopped whispering to her. She was to far gone by Thistleclaw's prying persuasion to see she was a conduit for his anger.
She felt the need to exit her den and rose from her nest. She walked out into the fading glow of day. Thistlestar glanced briefly over the camp.
It wasn't barren of warriors, but there wasn't much activity. She dropped down off of the ledge and walked to the entrance. Thornleap was sitting at the entrance and watched as she passed him in silence.
The she-cat harboring evil stopped at the border of Shadowclan and Thunderclan. Thistlestar gently smelled the air. It was filled with the scent of ferns, prey, and something she couldn't determine. Thistleclaw's shadow entered her vision.
"Mapleshade. Snowtuft." Thistleclaw's icy voice rung out. Thistlestar stayed still and quiet as she waited for something to happen. She glanced fiercely to her right side as she saw movement.
A shadow similar to Thistleclaw appeared, moving through the ferns without disturbing them. Thistlestar watched the spirit with unease. As it got closer it started to make a defined shape.
It grew a low undertone of white and a long scar stretched from its ear to its underbelly. The Shadowclan leader could see where it started but not where it ended. Once converted into a cat she could tell this was a tom.
Another form appeared shortly as the previous one remained silent. This one too took on the appearance of a cat. This one became a ginger tortoiseshell she-cat. Thistlestar knew who these cats were. She looked toward Thistleclaw and waited for him to spill his plan.
"Mapleshade... Snowtuft..."He repeated, slower this time. The warriors kept their heads down. Thistleclaw circled the three cats as Thistlestar watched curiously.
"I have an order for you to follow.. we have to get rid of these descendents of the big three." He paused in his circling.
"I want you to corrupt the sisters. Once you've done that, kill

Voleeye. After that, bring the she-cats here for execution." He turned to look at them properly.
"My only warning is to not act suspicious or let that pesky medicine cat apprentice spot you. If you fail, there will be no redemption." He growled deeply as he started to approach the duo.
"Mapleshade will go after the one who can see death. Snowtuft, you will persue the golden one." Thistlestar kept her ears keen as she hung onto everything he said.
The two spirits finally lifted their heads, as if awakened by the order from Thistleclaw. Without anymore exchanges, the two spirits raced off deep into Thunderclan territory.

Chapter 13

Runningwish had stayed in the clearing with Cheetahstep. Patchpaw and Barkfur's bodies had been taken for burial this morning but Cheetahstep hadn't moved.
Swiftrise, the Shadowclan rebel who had run after the she-cat, had stayed by her side as well. Runningwish had noticed this and so had everyone else. Cheetahstep and the tom were also sitting quite closely and Runningwish wasn't sure how she felt about that yet.
Greystar had come down the night before from his den to say a few things in honor of both cats; however, now he came out and called for Runningwish.
The tabby glanced at Cheetahstep before getting up and going to the grey tom's den. For some reason Runningwish noted this was the first time she came into his den and he wasn't in his nest.
"Yes Greystar?" Runningwish asked, taking slow steps into the den.
The tom glanced at her and seemed a bit distracted.
"I need you to check on Bloodclan for me. Tiny came here the other night and spoke with me. It made me wonder how they are progressing with their makeshift camp. And I can't send Snowstrike because she.. isn't herself." Greystar said. Runningwish abosrbed the information steadily and understood Greystar's actions. And she also wondered about the Bloodclan cats from time to time but never went to look in fear she would be accused of something like spying.
She bowed her head to Greystar.
"I can do it." She agreed. A small weight seemed to lift off of the tom's shoulders and he straightened.
"Thank you." He said. Runningwish turned away and left the den.
She made her way down the ledge and trotted toward Cheetahstep and Swiftrise but she was cut off by Sunscar.
She blinked down at her niece. The golden medicine cat smiled up at her.
"Lionblaze and Jayfeather are going to take me to Windclan and Riverclan to look for more spirits." Sunscar blurted out.
Runningwish smiled lightly at her. Sunscar yet again had a new mission. Strangely though she felt as if some of her enthusiasm was forced. She must still be grieving for Patchpaw but was atleast

trying to get over it with distractions.
"Thats great Sunscar. You will bring more light to this forest. Be safe." Runningwish said. Sunscar nodded happily and bounded off, probably to find Lionblaze and Jayfeather.
Runningwish continued her trot over to Cheetahstep.
"Greystar is sending me to check on the Bloodclan cats." She informed her friend. Cheetahstep looked up at her.
"Could I come along?" She asked curiously. Runningwish thought a moment. She didn't think having her friend join her would be a bad thing so she nodded.
She glanced at Swiftrise as she walked away. She could hear her friend say a small goodbye to Swiftrise and him returning it. Soon her friend caught up to her and they were now walking through the forest.
"So. Swiftrise seems like a nice tom." Runningwish said, watching her friend from the corner of her eye. Cheetahstep blinked.
"He is..." she responded, almost sounding a bit confused.
Runningwish grinned at the other she-cat.
"Ever since he chased after you and brought you back, you two have been rather close." The brown cat teased. Cheetahstep chuckled and looked away from Runningwish.
"Well he is nice." She paused.
"But he is Shadowclan, so I will keep my mind away from that." She said quietly. Runningwish nodded slowly and looked away from her friend. If she remembered right the camp shouldn't be much further. She didn't have much else to say to Cheetahstep since everything seemed delicate right now.
'

The Bloodclan camp came into view but the she-cats didn't see anyone yet. Runningwish took lead and wandered further into camp.
She was nearly winded as a blue tom tackled her from no where. She stared up into hostile amber eyes but they immediately went to a calmer stare as the cat realized they were from Thunderclan. The tom rose off of Runningwish and apologized briefly. Runningwish also got up and eyed the tom.
"Has Greystar sent you to check on us?" The blue tom asked, sitting down and watching them both closely. Runningwish nodded.
"Our deputy Snowstrike isn't herself at the moment.. so Greystar sent us instead." Runningwish admitted. The tom nodded in

understanding. It was hard to ignore the occassional glowing Thunderclan cat that would run by every so often.
His amber eyes shifted to Cheetahstep briefly.
"Well for a report to bring back to Greystar would be to tell him our camp is nearly done." He said, looking back to Runningwish. She seemed distracted by him for some reason. His expression became a little curious as she continued to stare and say nothing. Cheetahstep though caught the tom's attention away fron her friend.
"Well its nice to finally meet someone of Bloodclan. I haven't had the opportunity. I'm Cheetahstep and she is Runningwish." She introduced. The tom smiled a bit.
"I'm Walt." He said, dipping his head for a moment. Cheetahstep smiled politely. She nudged her friend to try and get her out of her stupor.
"Well we did as Greystar asked. We shouldn't bother you anymore." Runningwish blurted out.
"It was nice to meet you Walt." She said quickly and turned to leave. Walt bowed his head and watched them leave his sight.
As Cheetahstep and the brown tabby walked through the forest and back to camp, Cheetahstep glanced at her friend with a wide smile on her face.
"So. Walt seems like a nice tom." Cheetahstep said, mocking what Runningwish said earlier. Runningwish rolled her eyes, but she felt the embarrassment on her pelt still lurking.

(For those who have Winter Break starting after this weekend, Merry Christmas! And if you don't celebrate Christmas happy Hanukkah. And if you celebrate something else then happy/merry ___!)

Chapter 14

Mapleshade and Snowtuft had trekked through Thunderclan territory to the camp. They had been on the look out for the medicine cat apprentice as they stalked around the rim of the camp.
"How are we going to do this?" Snowtuft asked from behind Mapleshade. The dark spirited she-cat kept her gaze downward to watch what she could see of the clearing. There were a few warriors walking around and a large pack of cats she could guess were the Shadowclan rebels.
"This is tricky..." She muttered at first, pausing in her tracks as something caught her eye. Snowtuft walked up beside her and caught a glimpse of what she saw as well. The one blind eyed she-cat was leaving the camp with two toms.
"This is our chance then. How lucky." Mapleshade said as the three cats left the camp. She turned to Snowtuft.
"Now stop standing here like you have a mouse brain! Go find Goldensky. Meet me outside the camp by the lake." Mapleshade hissed. Snowtuft didn't hesitate and took off to travel further around the camp. Mapleshade had spotted her target long ago and now that the apprentice was gone she had her opportunity.
She leapt down into the camp. Being a spirit had its advantages. She walked with full confidence to Runningwish who had been by herself watching the camp entrance. No doubt thinking about Sunscar. All Mapleshade did was walk into Runningwish's body. Runningwish shivered and shook violently, her legs unable to hold her up, and collapsed. She went wide eyed at the experience. She tried to get up but realized she couldn't. The tabby was confused and frightened. What was happening to her?

Goldensky sat alone. Tigertooth still held distaste for her secret and refused to be near her. It broke her heart and she had been secretly dwelling in her sorrow. She watched him march about the camp, receiving glares and untrusting looks from their birth clan.
Goldensky held a saddened gaze as she watched the clan. Her mother had been almost indifferent with her return but she atleast came and asked her if she was well. After that she hadn't said a

word and left her alone.
Goldensky felt sick with her own self-pity. Everything in her told her to stop feeling so dragged down but she couldn't. Tigertooth seemed to despise her and it was as if she were a stranger to her clan.
She sighed. All she would tell herself is she deserved it for leaving with a traitor.. but for some reason she couldn't come to regret it.
Snowtuft stalked down into camp with his gaze strictly locked onto the gold she-cat. He watched her. Her head was low and he could tell her heart was heavy. Snowtuft growled to himself in warning. He wouldn't care what weighed this she-cat down. He had orders from Thistleclaw and he would not risk failure.
He alligned himself with Goldensky's body and she too shivered violently to his possession.

Chapter 15

Runningwish, or rather Mapleshade now, trotted out of camp eagerly. She half expected to die on this mission after being caught like a mouse under a root. She dared to say she was excited to carry out their plan.
Snowtuft appeared not long after, sitting inside Goldensky. Mapleshade smirked.
"We're lucky our hides won't be handed to us. That apprentice being gone is going to make things a lot easier.." Snowtuft nodded.
"Thistleclaw will be pleased." The tom said. Mapleshade narrowed her eyes and turned away from him. Thistleclaw would be pleased but Mapleshade felt disgusted at the thought of that tom being delivered a victory.
"Now all we have to do is get Voleeye alone and cut his precious orbs out of his skull..." Snowtuft spoke up, dragging Mapleshade out of her thoughts. She eyed the she-cat Snowtuft was in. She was fluffy, her face almost delicate if Snowtuft wasn't making her sneer.
"We need to stay under cover in their clan. We need to figure out how these she-cats acted so we don't trigger Voleeye against us." Mapleshade said and Snowtuft growled in resentment.
"We will be wasting time! Thistleclaw would want us to kill him off now and run for the Shadowclan border." Mapleshade snarled harshly at him.
"We can't take risks like that! And we have the time now to do this properly with that Starclan apprentice gone. We will do it steadily. We will not get caught. Do you understand?" Mapleshade demanded rather then asked. Snowtuft glared at her before nodding and looking away.
"Fine. But I will not stay in this form longer then four nights. And Thistleclaw will have our heads if we keep him waiting to long." Snowtuft warned his partner in this mission. Mapleshade watched him.
"Go and learn about Goldensky." She muttered to him. Snowtuft turned away sharply and headed back to the Thunderclan camp.
Just before Goldensky's form and Snowtuft's mind escaped Mapleshade's sight, another golden she-cat appeared. She had come

from the direction Snowtuft was heading and paused. The warrior glanced back before looking to Mapleshade.
"I'm sorry if I was interrupting something..." She said softly.
Mapleshade eyed her, just that statement alone told her enough about Runningwish and Goldensky's relationship for her to understand how to act around her new, and apparently, very distant sister.
"No, you're not. Goldensky came to tell me something, thats all." Mapleshade said, shining a small, fake, smile toward the gold and black spotted she-cat.
"Alright... Well anyway, I wanted to ask you if I could join some training with you and Seapaw." Cheetahstep asked. Mapleshade nodded slowly.
"Sure." She said. The two cats headed toward camp and Mapleshade found herself trying to memorize the path there so she wouldn't get lost trying to be this she-cat warrior. When they reached the camp Cheetahstep called for Seapaw as the two older she-cats waited by the entrance.
The black apprentice ran up to them.
"Are we doing some hunting, Runningwish?" The apprentice asked.
Mapleshade had to get used to being called by another warrior's name.
"No, we'll be doing some training." She paused as she realized she didn't know where the training area was.
"Why don't you lead us there today?" Mapleshade asked quickly, trying to keep herself from looking suspicious by not knowing the territory. Seapaw smiled brightly.
"I would love to lead us there!" The apprentice said, though her excitement seemed a little more controlled then most apprentices Mapleshade had seen before. Mapleshade motioned with Runningwish's paw for the apprentice to take lead, a small smile naturally appearing on her face.

Chapter 16

The three of them returned to camp and Cheetahstep watched her friend closely. Something seemed a bit off with her, but Cheetahstep had other things in mind to explain the change in behavior. Runningwish broke away from her and Seapaw and approached her sister, Goldensky, who had been sitting alone. Cheetahstep decided to think about it later and not confront her friend, atleast not right now while she was talking to her runaway sister.
Mapleshade rested on the dusty clay floor of the camp beside Snowtuft. She looked out toward the camp and almost felt.. something she couldn't place.. but, it was peaceful. Beside her though she could nearly choke on Snowtuft's bad mood.
"I know you're not pleased with our delay, but acting like a brat won't help anything. You'll get us caught if you act like yourself.. from what I've learned Goldensky isn't a grump." Mapleshade scorned her partner on this mission. Snowtuft looked at her, a burning glare hidden behind the she-cat's sweet eyes. Before he could spit a comment at her Mapleshade gave him another order.
"Learn about Goldensky. Learn to act like her. You're in a role now, not just a new pelt. If they see anything suspicious they'll find out something isn't right." Mapleshade warned him for what could have been the third time.
Across the camp Tigertooth was entering through the gate of ferns. He was surprised he had been allowed out, but apparently his word was a lot more powerful then he thought to Firestar. The past day he and Goldensky had returned was underwhleming.
He had expected hatred and distrust but he only received small signs of resentment and no leash. Maybe it was a sign of distrust that they let him be free, a sign of hate that they allowed to do so because they might have a chance of him disappearing.
Tigertooth wouldn't know. He had noticed as well that it was blatantly obvious he and Tigerstar were more infused then these other possessed cats running around. As he grew up he and Tigerstar molded together through mind, and then body. It seemed these other cats were becoming one with body while their minds

were seperated, but, the Starclan cat inside them dominated the controls.
He never had that with Tigerstar, though earlier when they were on the run from Firestar and when they confronted, Tigerstar had firmly taken hold of the controls. Tigertooth could only say he was pleased to know it was Tigerstar doing it as a precaution to protect him and Goldensky, rather then to just come back into this world to seek his unending revenge. It was a relief to everyone else as well when Firestar revealed Tigerstar's earlier explained motivations about leaving to take Tigertooth and Goldensky to a safer place, far away from the clans.
He spotted Goldensky sitting with her sister and sighed. He had been enraged at knowing his mate didn't tell him about her kitting. It deeply disturbed him to know he had frightened her to such an extent that she wouldn't share with him that she was with his kit. It only filled his being with guilt, the growing sympathy mixed with the regret of not letting her know she could trust him with that secret, making it hard for him to even walk as he was now.
Even Tigerstar was stirred by the discovery. But Tigertooth had given it thought and began to understand Goldensky's paranoia. She did follow him in a moments notice without any idea of what he had planned to do with Shadowclan.
The plan may have blown up in his face, but, he did intend for him and Goldensky to be happy, or atleast safe. He even had his own doubts about her before they left Shadowclan, the main reason he wouldn't speak to her during their time there, but as she stood against him, stood with him, and when they interacted, their relationship changed to a more mature level. Everytime they spoke together he started to see more of her character, and he liked it. Her spirit was strong and so bright it could destroy shadows for miles, but she knew when to hide her gift of joy when it wasn't needed. It was a good contrast against him and he wondered if Goldensky had an influence on him and Tigerstar.

Chapter 17

Walt marched amongst the bushes as he did almost everyday now. These days in a new forest were becoming dull and repetitive already. He and the other Bloodclan cats already knew the forest by heart after vigorous tasks Tiny gave them for the reason of learning the forest.
The only excitement he had was when Runningwish and her friend Cheetahstep came to their camp. He hadn't had a chance to actually talk to any lake-clan cats since they arrived here. Walt had to admit he was glad the both of them showed up.
He remembered what they looked like: a golden and black-spotted she-cat, and a brown she-cat with a golden paw. Walt paused in his patroling. Runningwish was her name, she caught his attention early on.
He had done his best not to stare too long at her, it was bad enough he tackled her by mistake. Her eyes were also charming, they were the second thing he noticed about her after her brown pelt.
There was another thing about her that Walt could feel, but he couldn't figure out what it was. He sighed softly and continued his walk again. It might just have been his mind getting too excited about a foreign she-cat.
His ear twitched at a nearby noise and his mind's thoughts were erased. Someone was nearby, but he couldn't fully recognize the scent. Walt approached the source, but stayed hidden.
He was surprised to see the she-cat who had been on his mind. Runningwish was looking around her, as if every bush, leaf and root was something to be in awe of. He was curious, the forest couldn't be so amazing to her since she lived here her whole life.
Walt took the moment to step out and see what she was doing.
"Hello, Runningwish." A voice called out nearby. Mapleshade nearly jumped out of Runningwish's body, but she controled herself and turned to face Walt.
"Hello..." She replied with hesitation. *'His name is Walt...'* A voice rung out in her mind. Mapleshade froze, her tail curling with unease. The owner of that voice was an easy puzzle, but Mapleshade was unexperienced in an event such as that.

".. Walt." She finally finished. The duo eyed each other, as if Walt knew something about the she-cat was off and Mapleshade tried not to give him a reason to believe so. Mapleshade started to move away.
"Well it was good to see you again. You uh.." She paused for words to come to her as she lurked away slowly. ".. look like you're doing well..." Mapleshade forced out and ran off. Walt watched Runningwish disappear into the bushes all around them. He sighed and turned back toward the Bloodclan camp.
When he arrived there he spotted Sam, Gouge, and Squid together in the small center of the camp. Sam was trying to talk to Gouge, who was doing her best to ignore the hopeless romantic, and Squid was tearing apart some fresh-kill.
Walt approached.
"Walt, what 'ave you been doin'? Tiny puttin' you on watch?" Gouge asked when she spotted him. Walt laid down, not too far from Squid, who was still devouring her meal.
"It would seem Tiny would rather utilize all of you while I'm just a guard of the camp." Walt informed her, confirming her suspicions and more. Gouge sighed, her purple eyes only resting on him for a few more moments before looking away to Sam who was trying to get her attention.
Walt watched them both. He had always been amused by the two when they were together. Sam was always doing his best to impress the she-cat for a chance to be her mate. His eyeless scarred socket was a sick reminder to them all what Gouge had done to him, but it also filled Walt with a sense of wonder.
Gouge was always known for being one of the most ruthless she-cats back home, and when Sam arrived she didn't hesitate to put him in his place. Walt remembered that day. He was still new to Bloodclan, another unimpressive number amongst the city cat refugees.
He was smaller then, thinner and his strength wasn't honed yet, but Sam had been worse off. When Sam arrived he came within the clan demanding a fight. He was raggedy like most of them, skinny and untrustful, but he shared a reason with all of them for daring to join: survival.
Gouge had been in the clan longer than any of them, even longer than Tim. Sam spotted her watching him from the top of a trashcan, the disgusting filth of the broken concrete slabs and dirt with small

plants desperately trying to make it through the crossfire stood rigid and uneven.
The walls around them were concrete slabs of rock, cut and shaped into smaller squares as a common two-leg design. Sam had called out to her to come down, he called for her to leave her perch because she wasn't a bird or something he called a "Queen".
Gouge did drop down, her fur bristling and her eyes growing ice around them as her face bore through Sam, but he refused to let her look completely through him. A ring was made around the two and Tiny watched from afar. Walt always wondered why he allowed the battle to happen, maybe he knew how it would change the two of them.
They ended up fighting and the ending was the only thing he could remember in the fight. It was how Gouge proved her dominance in the clan and how Sam was given a punishment for challenging her. In front of everyone, Gouge tore out the tom's eye and Sam was forced to yield to her. It was a miracle Sam was saved, but everyone had been glad he survived. Strangely though after that day, Sam had always been pursuing Gouge's love and it only confused the clan.
Walt sighed as the flash back washed away. He looked onward as Sam spoke to Gouge. Walt paused and frowned slowly. He had always wondered if he would find a mate. It seemed everyone in their group had someone to behold.
Tim had a mate and son in Bloodclan, Tiny had Smear and Goddess, Gouge and Sam were timed to be together, Taz and Squid were also destined as far as Walt was concerned. Christopher also had a mate, but he had over four kits at home waiting for him to return to them when this campaign was over.
Walt shook himself in his head. He would find someone eventually. He even wondered if his future mate would be from these lake-clans.

Chapter 18

The moon was sitting atop an unseen tower of the sky, representing the pinacle of the clouds. It made Voleeye uneasy. It was nearly full and Voleeye felt a persistent nag in his pelt.
Runningwish and Goldensky were distant to him more then ever before, and that was saying a lot for his golden sister. His only friends were the dragon flies that would occassionally become his company as he wandered the forest. The grass was cool from a short shower of rain earlier that day, and the soft breeze only made it even more pleasent to be out at this time of night.
Voleeye had tried many times to talk to Goldensky, but he was only turned away by her confusing moods. She would be greeting everyone with happiness, but when he approached she would turn him away with almost a hiss. It had plagued him, made him wonder what he could have possibly done to her to make her hate him out of them all.
If anything he should be the one treating her like that, she was the one who left their clan and their family after all. He sighed as he looked around him, seeing the Bloodclan cat's camp not too far from his current position. He let his mind wander again as he pressed onward through the forest toward the lake.
He had other things to think about anyway, Spottedlegs was his mate and was expecting their kits. He couldn't be anymore excited for the day of their birth. She had admitted her state of affairs a while back, long enough ago that the due date was nearly upon them both.
All the other kits were apprentices and getting closer to becoming warriors, though Voleeye knew it wasn't as close as his children to entering the world. He hadn't even considered names seriously yet, just a few Spottedlegs would offer to him. He paused as his paw touched the cool water of the shore, surprised the wet sand hadn't awakened him from his thoughts first.
He paused his reeling mind and looked out upon the water. It was beautiful, large and majestic with the reflection of all the clan's ancestors shimmering on the surface. His ear twitched as he heard movement behind him.

It must have been some kind of prey. When he only heard it fall silent instead of running away Voleeye grew suspicious. What animal would stay somewhere they could be in danger?
It must have been another cat then, someone watching him. Voleeye turned around, scanning the forest's edge with his gift. He spotted a golden cat amongst the leaves and realized it was Goldensky.
"Goldensky?" Voleeye called out. Goldensky rose and gazed at him.
"Voleeye..." She said quietly, her large fluffy tail twitching every so often. Something felt strange about her presence. She must have been through some changes while she was with Tigertooth.
That thought only reminded him more of how much he despised his sister's mate. He was born in their clan, lived in their clan, was trained in their clan, but yet he still found it in him to betray them all. Voleeye knew he would never be able to accept that, accept him as a clan mate ever again.
He glanced away from Goldensky for a moment. The golden cat charged at him and he flinched away on reflex from her. Suddenly Runningwish emerged, tackling Goldensky. The two glared at each other as Voleeye watched confused and startled.
His sisters stared intently at each other before Runningwish stood up.
"Goldensky, are you alright? Runningwish, what are you doing here?" Voleeye asked, too confused by what just happened.
Runningwish smiled.
"We were playing tag. It seems Goldensky wanted to involve you in the game." Runningwish said a little too fast. Voleeye shrugged it off for now.
"Tag? Why would you be playing that at this time in the dark?" Voleeye asked. Runningwish and Goldensky glanced at each other.
"Well we wanted to uh.. relive our younger days, bond together since she has been gone for so long." Runningwish explained.
Goldensky nodded quickly, almost looking embarrassed. Voleeye gave them both curious looks before sighing.
"Alright..." He said and turned toward camp to leave.
"I'll be returning to camp. Don't stay out here too late, you two have duties." Voleeye warned. The sisters nodded and bid him farewell.
As he walked he could hear them both start talking, but it was drowned out by the forest's music.

Chapter 19

I am so sorry this took so long to get out, I am absolutely furious with these Wattpad loading bugs! This is the third time I had to write this chapter because Wattpad couldn't save it properly, I am so sorry. Please enjoy.

Mapleshade was enraged with Snowtuft. How dare he try to make a move without her consent or expectation. She knew though that Snowtuft could have killed Voleeye through a surprise attack, but she also knew Snowtuft may have lacked at the end of the fight if Voleeye survived the initial surprise.
Mapleshade didn't exactly have too much faith in Snowtuft's abilities, their interactions heavily showed her distrust of him. But now wasn't the time to dread on Snowtuft's mistakes, now she had to deal with a golden she-cat glaring at her.
"How dare you ignore my orders," She began. "-You knew what his powers were. Never have I seen such foolishness!" She scorned with her bottomless fury. Snowtuft seemed to be struggling to hold down a snarl.
"I will repeat it one more time since your mouse brain cannot seem to comprehend it after saying it once. We will wait two more days before we attack Voleeye, I want to gain more information for Thistleclaw. Do you understand me this time? Or should I send you back to him?" Mapleshade finished. Snowtuft nodded silently, doing his best to leave the moonlit beach as fast as possible.
Mapleshade watched him, the green eyes of her host burned fiercely in contrast to the blue hue of the environment around her. Once the she-cat's pelt disappeared, her fur stopped bristling as she sighed. Mapleshade oddly recognized relief flow through her body and smooth her muscles, it almost felt like an overload.
It made her pause and wonder if Runningwish wasn't as vacant with herself inside as she thought.

Tiny prowled the forest of Thunderclan with one request on his mind. He wanted Scourge gone. The spirit chased his vision and did it's best to make the other tom bristle.

It annoyed him to no end, so he was forced to hold it behind a demeanor of disguise. How could he describe the interactions he shared with this phantom?
Scourge was a whisp, a cloud of annoying smoke that would try to trick him into choking on it. Tiny was easily able to overcome the shadow's tricks. He paused as he continued to think over his current situation, ignoring soft whispers Scourge tried to push through his ears.
Maybe he could speak to Firestar or Sunscar about this, they were the closest there was to experts on what was happening. He chuckled, they were actually the whole reason he was being put through this. His chuckles died down quickly though as he remembered Sunscar and Firestar had left to visit the other clans, which meant he would have to wait for their return to speak with them.
He supposed now all he could do with those circumstances was continue what he has been doing, just watching over his clan and keeping an ear open for any news from Greystar.

Greystar stood alone, he was at the lake. It was a strange time of day for him to be there. Well, it was strange for him to be out of the camp anyway. He couldn't quite remember the last time he had been outside of the camp to really stretch his legs and wander around.
He usually hid in the darkness of his small cave-like den. He had been noticed by his clanmates as he walked through camp toward the exit, many had given him bright and positive looks, others regarded him with their common neutral kindness. He gazed over the lake, it was filled with many things but all he knew it held was it's own water.
There were so many things about the lake he didn't understand. There were things he wanted to know about it, but things he was sure he would come to regret figuring out. He knew that was equal to his outlook on his life as well, about this world around him. Four sides with the same routine divided by their own mutual loyalties to different families. He sighed and drew away from the shore, the rising sunlight of the new sky on the horizon failed in making a grey pelt such as his ignite like so many others he had seen glow before. He had no time though to gaze toward something as brilliant as the sun, he had something bigger than himself and his

clan to prepare for at the best of his ability.
He could only hope the visions everyday life granted him could make him stronger for his plans of protection. For the protection of his clan, his family.

Chapter 20

The moon was high above the lake, but was visible from every clan. Swiftrise missed seeing the moon from his home, he didn't want to grow used to seeing Starclan's eye from Thunderclan's side of their world. His ears were open, twitching and swiveling whenever a sound outside of nature caught his attention.
He couldn't sleep, he was too disturbed by doubts and regrets swimming in his mind. Runningpaw, Thistlestar, convincing his clan to leave their home for the legacy of their clan. Was he in the right to have asked his clanmates to leave Shadowclan?
He sighed and looked over toward his friend Smokewind. The fluffier tom was sprawled out on the ground, sleeping soundly almost snoring as he occassionally fidgeted from his dreams. He smiled softly and looked around him. Shadowclan was all asleep, the queens and their kits were gathered together for warmth, warriors grouped together with an occassional apprentice in their circle for warmth.
It wasn't awfully cold, but it was still enough for them to stay close together. That was one of his doubts. Thunderclan couldn't be expected to have enough room for all of them, but was it worth staying here? The other warriors did grow restless, but the reminder from Swiftrise of their situation calmed their aggrivations.
He looked carefully over the queens, his stressful mind eased ever so slightly with relief that they could get the queens and their kits safely from Shadowclan, out of Thistlestar's reach. But it only reminded him of Runningpaw, his apprentice that Thistlestar executed without hesitation.
The only one who spoke up, stood in front of her clanmates, broke away from the obedience expected of them. Swiftrise felt his heart grow heavier, his fur began to shift as the wind blew through the camp. Her actions spoke so many volumes within him, it inspired him after her death.
Shadowclan needed to follow her example, break away from the oppression and take charge against a dangerous leader such as Thistlestar, to protect their clan. That was the reason he began to make a plan, a choice he offered to his clanmates in the later hours

of the night. It was a formula for a plan of escape from the clan, to retreat away, to disassociate from evil so they were not labeled as accomplices.
He had talked to each warrior and recruited them to his idea of escape and rebellion. But he was unlucky, some were left behind, mostly those that were loyal, but also some who could not make it with them or those who were heavily guarded.
That was the reason Longleaf and Darkear were not with them now. He did consider to go back for them as a rescue mission, but it felt like there weren't any good opportunities. But Swiftrise couldn't stay in Thunderclan's camp forever with that regret hanging over him. He rose and went over to Smokewind, nudging and prodding the tom to wake him up from sleep. The darker tom fidgeted and twitched before awaking startled. He saw Swiftrise and his wide eyes returned to a normal size.
"What are you waking me up for?" Smokewind asked curiously, sitting up and shaking himself. Swiftrise glanced around the camp.
"I plan on going to rescue Darkear and Longleaf. Tonight." He admitted. Smokewind took a moment to look up at him. Instead of a frown of disapproval or a look of bewilderment, Smokewind grinned.
"Right now?" He asked. Swiftrise nodded and started to walk toward the entrance with Smokewind following closely.
"I hope we don't get caught leaving by these Thunderclan warriors, I don't know what they would do if they saw us." Smokewind sighed.
Swiftrise didn't reply, he was too focused on leaving the camp, ideas of how to rescue Darkear and Longleaf racing through his head.

Chapter 21

Swiftrise led Smokewind through Thunderclan territory, his nose high and his ears wide as he listened, watched, and wandered. Smokewind was eagerly behind him, it was obvious the other tom was excited to stretch his legs and do something other than sit around Thunderclan's camp waiting for a battle.
Swiftrise could admit to himself he was just as restless to flex his claws, but his main priority was to rescue Longleaf and Darkear. The two Shadowclan toms were wandering the territory with little to no direction. Swiftrise was relying on mostly scent by now, trotting through the forest with impatience, his pelt beginning to grow lighter at the prospect of action.
Smokewind froze and swatted Swiftrise's flank, making his friend pause and turn to look at him, his ears searching every direction.
"What is it?" He asked quietly.
"Someone's coming..." Smokewind said, but his worried look turned to tease.
"Its that she-cat you like so much." He said with a smirk. Swiftrise narrowed his eyes at him in friendly warning. So Cheetahstep was nearby?
"Maybe we could ask her for help. She could take us to the border." Smokewind suggested, his large tail twitching as he waited for a response. Swiftrise didn't hesitate.
"Yeah, lets go ask her." He agreed, only further fueling Smokewind's grin. They began to follow the distant scent of the she-cat, the ferns and other bushes folding away from the two toms as they approached.
Suddenly a golden and black spotted pelt launched from it's hiding place in a bush ahead and tackled Smokewind. The black tom was thrown back. He kicked her off incase she tried to attack him with her claws. Cheetahstep arose quickly, her mouth staying in a snarl for a short moment. Once she realized the unrecognized scent of the toms was Swiftrise and Smokewind her tail curled in embarrassment, making Swiftrise smile in his own mind at how cute that made her look.
He held the thought behind his teeth as he approached her.

"Sorry. Swiftrise, what are you two doing out here?" Cheetahstep asked curiously, though her voice held nervousness in it. Swiftrise glanced at Smokewind and sighed.
"I and Smokewind are going to the Shadowclan camp to rescue Longleaf and Darkear..." The tom admitted. Cheetahstep tilted her head at him as she spoke.
"Just the two of you? Don't you think thats a bit reckless..?" She asked. Swiftrise was at pause for words as he realized the worry in her words, it made him wonder if this rushed idea of his was good or not. There were only two of them, how could they achieve a rescue?
Smokewind rolled his eyes playfully as he realized Swiftrise was becoming empty mouthed, so he took it upon himself to address the question.
"Of course it is reckless. But it is more risky if we have more warriors with us. Maybe you'd like to come along to make sure Swiftrise doesn't get himself into trouble?" Smokewind offered, a hint of tease in his mischevious eyes. Cheetahstep eyed him as he knew she was drawing back with a shy reaction. Swiftrise had been brought out of his thoughts by the comment and glared at the tom from the corner of his eye.
"What? It wouldn't hurt to have her join us." Smokewind pointed out snappily, "And we need to make up our minds now. I want to get this mission done before dawn." Smokewind said. Swiftrise nodded and looked to Cheetahstep who nodded as well.
"Then lets go." Cheetahstep said, turning and heading toward the Shadowclan and Thunderclan border.
"We're not far." She added. Smokewind smiled.
"I told you we were going the right direction." The black tom whispered. Swiftrise sent him a look only to be responded to with a shrug.
The trio traveled further to the edge of Thunderclan's domain until they came face to face with Shadowclan's border. Cheetahstep stepped aside as she looked at Swiftrise expectantly.
"Before we cross, I want to know your plan." Cheetahstep said. Swiftrise's ear twitched as yet again she made him realize something so simple.
"We're here for Longleaf and Darkear. Longleaf is our medicine cat, she didn't come with us when we ran out of Shadowclan. She was being held prisoner by Thistlestar. Darkear is an elder, too old to

have escaped with us." Swiftrise explained. She nodded slowly, glancing to the inside of their old territory.
"We'll need to find a way to sneak into the camp to find Longleaf. After that Darkear will need help to escape if they're too old to keep up normally." Cheetahstep decided. The toms nodded in agreement.
"You know, Swiftrise, I think there is a way to get into the medicine cat den. I've seen a few holes in the top. We could dig it open and get in to talk to Longleaf if she is in there." Smokewind suggested. Swiftrise gave a moments thought before nodding.
"To get to Darkear we'll have to rush to her den. Longleaf would have to be first. The entry to the elders den is too open." Swiftrise pointed out. Cheetahstep sat on the outside of their conversation, unfamiliar with their descriptions. To be honest, all she could find herself focusing on was the strong scent of pine trying to invade her senses from across the border, like a feeling of being drawn within it's shadows.
"Cheetahstep." Swiftrise's familiar voice brought her back to her normal senses. Her head turned to face him as he explained their plan.
First the trio carefully made their way through Shadowclan's forest. They drove closer to the camp, curving around its rim until they reached the back of the medicine cat den. Just as Smokewind said there was a weak poimnt in the room of the den. Swiftrise took initiative, clawing apart the den's roof and entering quietly. He spotted a figure asleep in a moss nest. He signaled with his tail for his comrades to join him. Smokewind fell in rather ungracefully, Cheetahstep nearly landing on top of him.
They spotted the figure and Swiftrise went over and nudged it. The cat stirred, wide green eyes opened to Swiftrise. A look of utter disbelief filled them.
"Swiftrise? What-?" Longleaf spotted Smokewind and an unknown she-cat. The medicine cat was lost for words. Smokewind grinned at her.
"Glad to see you're doing well Longleaf." The tom greeted. Longleaf could only nod.
"We've come to rescue you and Darkear. Darkear is staying in the elder's den still?" Swiftrise asked. Longleaf's gaze grew somber.
"No." She said weakly. Swiftrise feared what she meant, his eyes demanding an answer. Her eyes watched his with just as much emotion.

"When you all left.. Thistlestar..." Longleaf began but her voice broke off, as if she couldn't muster the strength to say it. Swiftrise paused and nodded stiffly.
"Atleast you're still alive. The clan has a right to know. We'll tell them together." Swiftrise told the medicine cat as he walked back toward the hole in the roof. He climbed through and out. Cheetahstep and Smokewind watched him, both of them feeling sympathy for the tom. They helped Longleaf climb her way out as they followed Swiftrise.
As they escaped the rim of the Shadowclan camp, Cheetahstep noticed that Swiftrise's despair towards the loss of Darkear was far more severe then Smokewind's. His brown pelt seemed less filled with optimism and pride, his head low and shoulders unenthusiastic. Longleaf followed closely after him as Cheetahstep and Smokewind covered the back. She glanced toward Smokewind. His head was low as well, but he seemed to have more motivation in his strides.
"Was Swiftrise close to Darkear?" Cheetahstep asked, the question slipping out purely on curiousity. Smokewind looked over towards her, his whisker's twitching for a moment before he answered.
"She was his mom's mother. Swiftrise's mother was Sootwhisker. She had rejected Swiftrise after two of his siblings died. Darkear would stay in the nursery to keep him warm, and to convince Sootwhisker to let him have her milk. When he could eat fresh kill Darkear moved him into the elders den with her..." Smokewind explained. Cheetahstep looked over to the tom ahead of them, his large package of suffering now easy to understand.
"And she was executed for trying to escape?" Cheetahstep asked. Smokewind nodded.
"He'll pull through. He always does." Smokewind reassured her with a light smile on his face. Cheetahstep returned one as they entered Thunderclan's territory.

Chapter 22

Mapleshade rested among the warriors of the den, Runningwish's nest was unfamiliar to her but she made due with it. Unlike the other cats in their mossy beds Mapleshade couldn't find sleep in this place. With eyes open and ears alert, she stared at the outside world through the entrance of the den.
She had no reason, just something to look at as she let her mind wander. She had to admit she was a little paranoid as well as relieved Snowtuft, or rather Goldensky, wasn't sleeping within the den. There was still mistrust lingering within the clan in relation to Tigertooth and his mate.
Mapleshade flexed Runningwish's claws from habit, something she had strangely developed lately. She sighed and rose, exiting the den without hesitance. All she could hear was the average sounds of Thunderclan's forest and smell the scent of slumbering Shadowclan cats nearby.
With a swift glance around the camp she spotted Voleeye enter the nursery. Her whiskers twitched in mild interest, curiousity spreading like a fever in her body. Mapleshade trotted over and peeked within the queen's den.
Voleeye was sitting near Spottedlegs, her belly round from her pregnancy. The two were talking together calmly, probably something sweet in their responses. Mapleshade knew she shouldn't be interested but she couldn't keep Runningwish's ears from leaning closer to listen.
Voleeye looked over at her and she began to retreat almost as if it were a flinching reaction.
"Runningwish?" Spottedlegs called gently from within the den.
Mapleshade felt nervousness creep through her as she knew now there was no escape. Voleeye watched her.
"Come in, we were just talking about names for the kits when they're born." Voleeye said, urging her over with his tail.
Mapleshade feigned a smile and entered the den, sitting down with the two other cats.
"So... What names were you considering...?" Mapleshade asked cautiously. The longer she sat there with the both of them looking

at her it felt more and more like they knew who she really was and what she was up to two days from now. Voleeye looked over to his mate as she stared off in thought.
"I had the idea of naming one after my father.. Oakpebble..." The tortoiseshell said softly. Mapleshade didn't recognize the name, and from what she could tell internally neither did Runningwish.
Voleeye gazed over at his mate with a certain softness in his eyes that made Mapleshade's heart ache for a reason unknown to her. There was something here that made her want to stay and talk more, to crave their conversation, but that same thing drove her to desperately wish to leave.
It was emotional turmoil, something familiar to a cat with a background like hers.
"That sounds very sweet, Spottedlegs." Mapleshade said, doing her best in balancing her thoughts versus her actions. Voleeye chuckled.
"Maybe we should name one after my mother or father. Vineclaw or Lionpelt, I know my father is getting older each day and silver hairs are starting to appear..." Voleeye said, looking over to Runningwish. Mapleshade frowned.
"Yes.. I have.. Taken notice of that as well." Mapleshade said in response, unaware of who exactly Vineclaw was or even what he looked like. The same could be said for Runningwish and Voleeye's mother Lionpelt.
After talking to them for a while longer she tore herself slowly away from them, strangely like a bandaid being removed from a hairy arm. Mapleshade sighed as she felt the outside breeze once again, the scent of Thunderclan's clay floor and the feel of the soft ground reunited her with her true intentions again.
She decided to go back to the den and talk to Snowtuft again tomorrow to start planning their ambush. As the thought passed through her head it felt like something began to bubble in her heart, like butterflies let loose from a cage in her soul.
The ache from earlier appeared inside her again and she fought it with all her will power. What were these feelings? Was it regret for agreeing to this mission? Worry for hurting someone like Voleeye, taking him from his mate and future kits?
Mapleshade had so many paranoid thoughts racing through her mind she couldn't pick which one made the most since. For her they seemed so extreme and irrelevant.
"Runningwish." A thick voice broke through the darkness of her

cluttered mind. Mapleshade wielded her host's eyes like a blade as she looked to where the call came from. Before her stood Greystar, strangely his pelt seemed to have longer fur, but Mapleshade couldn't be sure. She had only seen the Thunderclan leader once or twice since taking possession of Runningwish's body.
She watched him a moment before he called out to her again, "Runningwish, I would like to speak to you in my den." The grey tom said, turning away to enter said den. Mapleshade awoke from her lack of response and quickly trotted to the highledge and climhed up. Her legs slightly shook, her nerves were on fire at the prospect of Greystar knowing the truth under Runningwish's pelt.

Chapter 23

Mapleshade sat onto the soft floor of Greystar's den, nervously doing her best to avoid not looking him in the eye. It was a clear sign something was wrong, giving enough evidence for suspicion to bloom. Mapleshade could not allow that to happen.
The larger cat laid down on his nest as his eyes finally rested on her. Mapleshade feared any chance for silence to occur between them, feeling fidgety as she felt the urge to say something even though not even five seconds had passed yet.
"Runningwish, I have known you as a strong warrior. You're a compassionate and loyal member of Thunderclan. You are the littermate of Goldensky and Voleeye." He paused, waiting for her to reply in confirmation. It took a moment for the cogs in Mapleshades head to begin turning again, as if her concern for the situation had nearly wiped her memory. She calmly nodded in response, not sure if she could trust herself to form words. Greystar nodded back, glancing away from her as he continued.
"I am also aware you are a close friend to Lionstar... Lionblaze's daughter, Cheetahstep." Greystar said, yet again prompting her to answer.
"Yes, I would consider myself as such." Mapleshade said, nodding again to keep her act consistent. The tom looked back at her.
"Then I hope you know about her relationship to one of the Shadowclan rebels. He seems to be the temporary leader of the group, having been the one to lead them here and plead for refuge or escape. I asked you in here not to turn in Cheetahstep for some kind of punishment, I am just curious of why she is allowing herself to.. get to know the tom. It's my job to ensure things like this don't cause any problems for our clan. I believe I have been more merciful and generous than any other leader by allowing them shelter. I am even considering allowing them to hunt for themselves and train their apprentices here, maybe even allow them to just join our clan until all of these prophecies blow over. But, I cannot risk so much for nothing." He stopped talking as his eye contact stayed firm against Mapleshade. Runningwish's green eyes were wielded steadily against his amber ones as the tom paused, leaving

Mapleshade curious for more words but desperate to finish this monologue.
"I wanted to ask if you could try and, to some extent, 'infiltrate' the Shadowclan rebels, or gain Swiftrise's trust, and find out if they do have hostile motives against me. I only need to know so I can have greater judgement." Greystar said. Mapleshade nodded slowly, breaking her eyes away from his.
"But what about the deputy? Shouldn't she be given this task rather than just an ordinary warrior." Mapleshade said, mourning for herself as she realized this would be something she would have to fulfill before her and Snowtuft's scheme could be unleashed. She was so overwhelmed she hadn't remembered the deputy's actual name, having only used the pronoun 'she' and her title as the deputy to address her in the conversation. Greystar sighed.
"No, I cannot do that. If Snowstrike had begun poking around in there business, especially being possessed by that other cat they would grow suspicious and distrusting of her. It wouldn't work, even if she had the excuse of Snowfur being the inhabitant of her pelt." Greystar pointed out squarely. Mapleshade internally rolled her eyes as she felt herself grow enraged by the ridiculousness of this situation. Runningwish just had to be friends with some she-cat who just so happened to be developing a bond with the so-called leader of the Shadowclan rebellion. That thought made her pause. The rebellion that had escaped her superiors, the ones who had defied Thistlestar, therefore were against Thistleclaw. Maybe she could use this to her advantage and win extra favor from the Dark Forest spirit who was leading without remorse just passed the border at Thunderclan's side. She could lead them to destruction from within, earning revenge for Thistleclaw as a price for their defiance.
It could definitely benefit her in the long run, maybe save her life if Thiseclaw ever became livid with her. Yes, this was a wonderful opportunity.
"Will you do it?" Greystar's deep voice echoed out into the cavern of her conspiring mind, bringing her attention to the present moment. She nodded slowly, trying to sell off that Runningwish was hesitant in accepting the responsibility he was offering her.
"I suppose, for better or for worse, it is an important thing to do." She quietly said in agreement. Greystar softly smiled at her.
"Thank you. Now, please, be safe. May Starclan light your path." He

said in farewell as Mapleshade rose from the floor and exited the den.
"May they do so for you as well, Greystar." She called over her shoulder as her head reached the outside of his den. Now she had to update Snowtuft of her new plan, and she preferred thinking about dealing with the rebels than his attitude.

Chapter 24

"How dare you!" Snowtuft snarled, Goldensky's fur fluffing up in frustration, a fury the golden she-cat had never displayed in her life. Mapleshade knew with these next few days Snowtuft would abuse the pelts ability to perform such an action. They were alone together by the lake, driven into solitary by Mapleshade's request of the other possessing spirit.
Currently Mapleshade was watching Snowtuft pace, Goldensky's tail twitching and swatting in the air in anger.
"You are horrible at playing your part." Mapleshade commented, licking at her paw as she avoided Snowtuft's stiff glare.
"I am horrible at playing my part?! You're the one giving that Sunscar brat any chance possible to come back and uncover our plans! Thistleclaw would have torn your throat out if you told him what you just told me!" Snowtuft roared, his anger collapsing into a bottomless pit as his patience no longer supported Mapleshade's changes in their operation. She sighed at her partner, losing her own patience with him ounce by ounce as he began circling her.
"Thistleclaw would agree with me. I am doing this because there are more cats to fool than just the half blind medicine cat." Mapleshade countered, using her extended knowledge as an advantage over the less experienced dark forest member.
"I've corrupted cats long before you were recruited, you have no sway in my decisions or Thistleclaw's. I know what I've done, but you must realize Thistleclaw chose me to be on this mission. That says a lot more than why he chose you." She continued with her venomous growl, giving Snowtuft one of her sharpest glares. The tom mumbled to himself but stopped his circling, sitting and trying to clear his mind. Even if he didn't agree, somewhere in her speech she had a point.
"We need to kill Voleeye. I don't want to be putting this off. We've tricked them so far, staying any longer can risk us losing that trust. Voleeye must die, and I will kill him. With or without you I will fulfill this task." He began to walk away, pausing as he reached the ferns, "And I will do it tonight." Snowtuft warned, resuming his walk into the forest. Mapleshade watched him go, her heart

climbing its way into her throat. Tonight Voleeye would die. Should she have stopped him? Should she have protested against him? Mapleshade knew they must complete their plan, once the tom was dead she would not need to keep up a charade anymore. There was no risk if he died tonight. Mapleshade lowered her head, Runningwish's emerald eyes turned to the ground. Her chest tightened as she felt sorrow overtake her.
Voleeye would be killed by Snowtuft tonight, and she couldn't do anything to stop him. Stopping him, delaying him, it would be a direct act of disobedience and loss of loyalty to Thistleclaw if she didn't follow through. Snowtuft with his loud mouth would snitch to him about her passiveness in following through.
Mapleshade stood with a heavy heart, though she now realized it wasn't her who was being dragged down by sorrow. Runningwish was still inside her, pushing for her to reconsider defeat against Snowtuft's plan, but she knew there was no other option. If Mapleshade wanted to live she needed to stay loyal to the dark forest, she couldn't betray them or her soul would be destroyed for it.
"I'm sorry." Mapleshade whispered to no one who was physically with her. The person she was talking to knew what she was saying. "I will.. Do my best to make it easy for him." She tried to promise as she left the island, staring up at the canopy above her.
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Mapleshade had made it back to camp and padded to the fresh-kill pile. She deposited a few mice she had caught, eyeing the pile. She was hungry but she turned away, undeserving of a meal.
Why did she feel so disgusting? So disgraceful? Mapleshade knew from the beginning what she was doing.
Killing cats wasn't anything knew for her to experience. Manipulating cats wasn't a new task either. She had lied and bargained for her own gain, why was it so different this time?
She sighed as she looked at the nursery, certain Spottedlegs was occupying the den. Maybe before she left she could talk to her one last time. She walked over to the den, her eyes feigning a normal behavior but deep down she was being dragged through mud, it was a sticky misery.
The sight of the tortoiseshell queen laying in her nest brought a small spark to her heart, tugging at its strings to lighten its load.
"Hello, Spottedlegs. How are you?" She asked as she poked her head

inside. Spottedlegs looked over at her curiously, surprised to be getting a visitor so late.
"I'm well. The kits are having fun causing me a few inconveniences, but other than that I'm glowing with joy." She said with a cheery undertone of her tired voice. Mapleshade offered a smile, her ears twitching as a cricket began to play it's melody somewhere nearby.
"I'm sure they will be just as rowdy when they're born." Mapleshade said, looking to the queen's stomach. Something in her ached as she saw her bellyfur. It struck a cord in her memory of when she was a queen.
Even with such corrupting memories flooded through the back of her eyes, and their consequences, she kept up a smile of good humor to the she-cat.
"Have you seen Voleeye? He promised to come see me before he went to sleep." Spottedlegs piped up, tilting her head to the left to try and look passed the brown she-cat. Mapleshade paused in replying. Tonight was the night, she was well aware of what Voleeye could be doing at this hour.
"I..." She paused again as her mind fought itself in a moral civil war. The overwhelming memories of her kits, their father abandoning her. Voleeye being killed would be the same effect on these kits residing in Spottedleg's tummy.
She couldn't go through with it, not anymore. Mapleshade rose and bolted away, careless of the world around her as a startled and confused Spottedlegs laid in her nest, watching as the brown pelt vanished behind the wall of ferns.

Chapter 25

Mapleshade rushed through the woods, her ears leaning forward with her eagerness as she leaped through the undergrowth. Now was not a time for her to hesitate or question her motivation, she had left the camp and that told her all she needed to know about her own heart. Snowtuft had taken Voleeye to the island.

It was where they had agreed to trick him into coming for the kill. She felt disgusted with herself as her mind still fought in support of her decision and against it. She couldn't let this happen, she couldn't be responsible for something like this.

Something in her, far deeper than her craving for revenge, screamed and yelled to the top of its lungs for her to run and undo her pact with Thistleclaw and the Dark Forest, to reverse her evil desires to save Voleeye. It wasn't Runningwish's voice calling for her to stop, it was a shard of her soul pleading with her to keep it from falling into the darkness that had consumed her long ago. She had no chance of ever being pure again, she knew that, but the opportunity for some kind of selfish redemption would be enough to satisfy her beyond any consequence.

Runningwish's legs were throwing themselves to the floor as she sprinted, ignoring the bushes and fallen branches that tried to challenge her on her path to salvation. Snowtuft would be stopped, and Mapleshade only knew one way to do such a thing. If her spirit was put at risk of destruction, keeping Voleeye intact would be worthy enough of a reason for her to put her soul on the line.

She could see the lake between the trunks of the trees as she looked off into the distance to see how close she had come to her destination. What was she doing? If she survived this she wouldn't live for very long after.

When Thistleclaw finds out she disobeyed him she would be hunted by both the clans and the Dark Forest, it would not be an easy journey to undertake. Mapleshade growled to herself as she focused on charging through the forest. She was not worth these risks, that was all the more reason she believed it was right for her to do this.

Soon she arrived at the island, her paws aching from the unpaused sprint. She ignored her minor agony, looking around the clearing

with desperation as she sniffed the air for Goldensky or Voleeye's scent. Once she found it she trotted with worry in her steps, the only hope she had was there was no blood lingering in the air.
She spotted them just beyond a few bushes, Snowtuft perched upon Voleeye as he violently forced the other cat off of him. Mapleshade took no extra time in calling out to them, she had seen enough to know that Snowtuft was going through with his plan. It was her moment to strike.
"Snowtuft!" She practically roared, leaping from the shadows as Snowtuft looked at her with a gaze stricken with fear. Voleeye watched with uneasiness as the two she-cat bodies collided. His eyes grew wide as the spirit of Mapleshade flew out of Runningwish, flying through Goldensky and exiting with a white tom in her clawed grasp.
He ran to his sisters as he watched the spirits clash in a battle he did not understand. He could recognize their twisted appearances as nothing but corrupted, but he was still left unsettled at the sight of them turning on each other. He nudged both of his sister's forms as she laid in the mixed dirt, stirred by their collision.
Both soon rose with curious looks, but glad to have their bodies back.
"What happened?" Goldensky asked in a somewhat dizzy voice, almost overwhelmed by the violent seperation from Snowtuft.
Runningwish shook herself as she looked over to Mapleshade and Snowtuft scuffling not far off.
"We need to help her!" Runningwish said as she charged over to the other two cats without a second thought or listening to Voleeye call out in warning to her. The two remaining siblings shared a look of concern before nodding to one another, agreeing that they needed to stop the Dark Forest spirits. Both charged along behind their sister, leaping into the fight against Snowtuft.
Mapleshade regretted her decision as she saw the other three join in, but was shocked to note they were helping her against Snowtuft.
With scratches adorning every limb and his face scarred for the rest of his ethereal life, the Dark Forest tom ran off into the darkness.
"Thistleclaw will know of your betrayal, Mapleshade!" He yowled to her in warning as he departed in panic. Mapleshade watched him go, the only suffering she received from the battle being a racing heart and a chest filled with anxiety. Now her run from the clans and the Dark Forest would begin.

She turned to look at Runningwish and her siblings, her eyes watching with anxiousness for their next move. Runningwish looked over to Goldensky and Voleeye who were giving the spirit and untrusting gaze. The brown she-cat looked to the ghost with gratitude, an emotion Mapleshade had not anticipated receiving from the warrior she had possessed.
"Thank you for saving them." Runningwish said, standing to better address the cat.
"It took a lot for you to do as you have done. Please, join us. We could use anyone we can against the Dark Forest. I know you can't go back after this, and I don't want you to be running from them." Runningwish offered, Voleeye and Goldensky hesitating in agreeing. Soon they nodded to Mapleshade as they agreed.
"I can only assume you were going to help that tom kill me. I am indebted to you for turning against your.. evil nature to rescue me. Whatever your motives were, you still chose to help. I am very grateful for you doing so." Voleeye spoke up from behind his sister, Goldensky smiling in silence.
"Please, Mapleshade. I know how it can be to.. make a mistake. Forgiveness is not something you should turn away." Goldensky said at last as Mapleshade seemed to doubt their attempts to console her. Mapleshade felt a blooming in her chest, her eyes casting away from them.
"I.. I suppose I have no other choice," She looked back to them, "I will help you defeat the Dark Forest." As the words left her mouth she felt as if the shard of good left in her soul seemed to grow to a greater size. Maybe a darkness she thought owned her could be overturned through the right actions.

Chapter 26

Runningwish was more than happy to be able to control her body again, possession was not a fun experience for her. Goldensky had agreed when Runningwish mentioned it to her, both pleased to be alone in their minds and pelts. They had returned to camp after the attack, taking Mapleshade to Greystar to tell him what had transpired at the island.
The grey tom hesitated in trusting the she-cat, even when she had offered to tell Thunderclan everything she knew about Thistleclaw's plans.
"They will most likely change them, but the end goal will be the same. Snowtuft has reached them by now and informed Thistleclaw of my betrayal." Mapleshade admitted with a heavy heart, expecting to be turned away like an outcast as she stood in Greystar's den. Many warriors had stared with wide eyes and bared teeth when she had arrived with the guidance of Runningwish and her siblings. Even the Shadowclan cats had joined in on giving her a not so welcomed greeting.
Greystar examined her with his amber eyes, his expression set in some kind of stone so she couldn't predict what was possibly running through his mind. The only thing she could recognize was the familiar spark of caution in his eyes. He was definitely a wise leader for not allowing her passage without some kind of test of her broken loyalty to Thistleclaw's army.
Runningwish recalled the meeting with the older tom clearly, now sitting by the warriors den as she watched Voleeye be fretted over by Spottedlegs. He must have told her the story of his survival against Snowtuft's attempt of an assassination. The queen had every right to worry about her mates well-being.
She sighed as she looked to the sky, surprised to see it was only noon. After their talk with Greystar, he wanted each of her siblings to be present as witnesses so he could come to a decision, they had been dismissed as he chose to speak privately with the spirit. She and the others chose not to speak about it until Greystar made an announcement, which he had done at dawn.
Now Mapleshade was a third party in the clan, not accepted by the

Thunderclan inhabitants, or the Shadowclan rebels. She was alone in the camp, separated from everyone for their supposed safety and her own. Runningwish pitied her isolation.
She should have been seen as a hero, but during these times of being weary of war it was hard to allow more people to join your flock when tension was growing much thicker than it has ever been. Sunscar would be returning any day now with Lionblaze and Jayfeather, she could help Mapleshade be fully reformed and it would probably help her gain some of the clan's trust. The brown tabby sighed as she stood up, her legs ready and eager for her to do literally anything.
She padded over to the camps entrance, glancing over her shoulder to her sister. Goldensky was missing from camp, and she noticed that Tigertooth wasn't present in his usual moping spot. Maybe they had gone somewhere for privacy to discuss their disagreements and issues over Sunscar? She would never know.
Without looking back again she exited the camp, beginning a slow trot as she decided she would begin a small hunt to keep herself and her mind occupied.

Chapter 27

Sunscar's ears perked as she looked over to Firestar in curiosity. "Can you say that again?" She asked, her eyes squinting against the bright sun as they walked along the shore of the lake, the moor of Windclan surrounding them on all sides. Her blonde fur was stirred up by the wind, making her look fluffier than usual as Firestar walked proudly beside her, Firesong's fur was too short to be really affected by the winds. Behind them was Lionblaze and Jayfeather, both of the older toms seeming to drag their feet as they found themselves caught up in their own conversation.
The tom looked at her, his eyes unaffected by the glaring sun that brought the world it's life force.
"You need to choose a champion to take down Thistleclaw." Firestar repeated, returning his gaze to ahead of them as she also looked forward. A champion? What did that mean?
"Why would I need to do that? And what do you mean by a 'champion'?" Sunscar asked as she spotted the trees of her home territory ahead of them, but she knew from their small travel around the lake that anything in the distance was farther than it appeared. The spirit took a moment to reply, his whiskers twitching as he seemed to be thinking out his answer to her.
"You cannot fight Thistleclaw, as I am sure you're aware. You were raised as a medicine rather than a warrior, something that stirred up a few arguments in Starclan by the way, so you cannot fulfill your original destiny. You need someone to fight in your place. With your eye that allows you to see the spirits it would've been expected you would be the one to take down the threat of the Dark Forest. But, instead, you will need to pick your successor for this deed." Firestar explained, leaving Sunscar a little more confused with only a little of her heart's questions coaxed. Talking about destiny and fate and how certain cats should follow certain paths always made her head ache from all the possible alternatives. Apparently Sunscar's talent had been expected but her sudden swerve from her supposed destiny was not foreseen by Starclan, a possible alternative path that she had taken without realizing her involvement in the universes flow.

"Starclan got into arguments over me choosing to be a medicine cat? How can that make any difference?" She said as she thought over his small speech of her older purpose.
"It made all the difference, Sunscar. After you chose to become a medicine cat most of us were trying to think of ways to help guide you back into the path of being a savior to the forest against Thistleclaw, but others believed it was a lost prophecy and we would have to watch our clans be torn apart by the Dark Forest," He paused to look down at her again as his ears turned to face her, "Those were the ones who relied on destiny to guide them, not realizing you had defied fate by taking an unexpected pathway, it was real life proof they did not need to follow their visions. That's usually why cats like that don't get much involvement in the dreams we send to the clans." He sighed as he continued his walk alongside her, his ear twitching as a bug flew past. Sunscar furrowed her brows as she tried her best to digest everything Firestar was sharing with her.
"Your choice to become a medicine cat over a warrior was the reason we came down to the lake." Firestar admitted aloud. Sunscar glanced at him as he said it, both her eyes widening at the reveal.
"That is the only reason any of you came to help?" Sunscar asked.
Firestar nodded as he looked up at the sun, probably to try and guess what time of day it was. The sun looked back at him, unsure of its influence as the tom didn't seem to react much to the heat. It appeared to be between morning and midday.
"Not entirely, many had proposed we go down to help even before you were old enough to even become a warrior, or medicine cat. Only after you chose to become what you are now did that opinion grow among Starclan. In the end the majority won out and a few cats were selected to return and help. So far only two have lost their connection with their hosts. Whoever is left in Starclan may have chosen to call them back or to not send them back. It's difficult to keep control of a cat when they've gone through despair or stress. It makes the minds unfuse, so to speak." Firestar said as he took a breath of air to breathe after his second speech. It brought a bigger viewpoint on how everything was working in the clan, the ones who had been possessed by spirits were not being controlled, just connected into a single mind. Sunscar pondered over the simple idea.
She had seen the two who had "disconnected" as Firestar put it, but

she never quite understood how the connection could fall apart or why the other spirit would leave rather than jumping to a new body. Sunscar would guess it made more sense they went back to Starclan and either try to return or to stay and assist wherever they ended up. The medicine cat sighed as she glanced back at Lionblaze and Jayfeather as she heard them pick up their pace to catch up with the other two cats.
"I think I'll give the questions a rest for now, thank you for explaining to me, Firestar." Sunscar said with only an ounce of gratitude as she began to feel the ache in her paws. For each clan they traveled to the medicine cats there had given them herbs for their journey, even with Sunscar stopping the group gather such herbs to replenish their strength, but it seemed they were at their end of effect, leaving Sunscar eager to return home and tell everyone of the new spirits in the other clans and tell Greystar what Firestar had just informed her of.
"You deserve your rest when we get back to Thunderclan. I and Lionblaze will tell Greystar what happened on this trip." Jayfeather spoke up, his blind eyes now exposed to the winds and weather of the outside world. He had abandoned the wrappings he had around his head to mask his eyes, with it removed only small scars could be spotted while the eyes themselves seemed to have healed nicely. Sunscar chuckled as the older tom twitched his ear in response to her.
"I think we should tell Greystar – and the clan- everything together. I agree I need some rest, but I want to be there to tell everyone the news about the spirits." Sunscar said, brushing off her fatigue for now. Jayfeather seemed as if he was going to respond to her with something caring but angry, but then Lionblaze interjected.
"You're right, Sunscar. We should tell the clan together, but you out of all of us need rest. Me and Jayfeather are used to long travels now and Firestar..." The tom looked at the spirit possessed tom, "Well, I can't speak for him mainly because I don't understand how it works for him, but he probably has the most stamina out of all of us at this point. When we return we can tell the clan tomorrow, there isn't any rush for them to just know who became partners with spirits in other clans." Lionblaze consoled her as he smiled. The medicine cat returned it with unsure motivations, but she shrugged it off in her mind.
"If you say so. But, I will not be stopped from talking to

Runningwish. She was probably worried about me while I was gone." Sunscar said, the energy in her movements returning to her as she thought of her aunt.

Chapter 28

"That wouldn't have happened if I was here." Was the first thing Sunscar said when she had caught Runningwish alone to talk to her, having just been updated on Mapleshade's change of heart.
Runningwish sighed as she looked away from her niece.
"It handled itself, you didn't need to be here. You had a duty to look into the other clans with Firestar, Lionblaze, and Jayfeather. We just need to appreciate Mapleshade's humanity." Runningwish soothed, trying to lift the weight of guilt from the medicine cat. The golden she-cat hesitated in responding, obviously wanting to retaliate with more arguments about how she was to blame for the entire situation, but she held back in honor of Runningwish. They were currently by the medicine cat den, just beneath its entrance as Sunscar had called her over moments before.
"Even so, how can you tell she is really reformed? Anyone can pull something like she did, it could be some kind of trust gaining strategy." Sunscar pointed out, queuing Runningwish to nod slowly.
"You aren't wrong, but I was with her the entire time. I could see and hear everything, I felt everything she did. The regret, the hope, the desire to change. The biggest thing I felt before we parted was the fear of betraying Thistleclaw. Greystar is taking precautions anyway, he doesn't trust her. He is a good cat, he will keep the peace and ensure she stays in line." Runningwish licked at her right paw as she raised it, slowly lowering herself to lay down. Sunscar watched her with a worried expression, although Runningwish felt the younger she-cat had broader thoughts on her mind.
"Voleeye and Goldensky agreed with me that she deserves to be treated like an awakened hero, but only we know and saw what she accomplished. You will just have to find your own way to trust her." Runningwish said as she lowered her head to her paws. She was exhausted, her spirit drained from her separation from Mapleshade. She looked across the clearing as Sunscar sighed.
She spotted Goldensky lying beside Tigertooth, it seemed the two had patched things up and were healing. It made her heart glow, knowing so many relationships were forming anew and stronger. Sunscar, however, hadn't noticed her parents bond blooming anew

over the tattered remains.
Runningwish wasn't surprised she hadn't noticed. Tigertooth had only attempted to actively speak to her twice since their arrival. Runningwish was unsure when Goldensky had first become possessed, and even without that she wasn't sure if Goldensky had attempted to talk to her daughter.
She wanted to ask her niece about it, but she felt it was not her place to do so. Bringing up the entire incident may cause some unneeded heartbreak or frustration. Runningwish knew she didn't want to be the center of any storm that could call upon them.
Her ears stiffly shot upward as she heard a loud yell for attention, leaving her tiredness behind as she rose from her spot.
"The first assault is coming!" Yowled someone Runningwish didn't recognize. At first it was hard to tell who it was exactly, barging into the camp yelling out warnings of an attack. Runningwish looked to Sunscar before immediately thrusting at her with her nose, pushing the medicine cat towards Snowpoppy's den.
"She doesn't sound like she is kidding, get somewhere safe!" Runningwish urged as the spirit of urgency spread throughout the clan like wildfire, all the warriors banding together around the entrance, Shadowclan warriors rising together in alarm. A few warriors from either side formed a small barrier, probably made of two or three warriors, to protect the nursery. As Runningwish trotted forward, Greystar appearing from his den, she recognized the cat calling the emergency.
The cat in question was Squid, one of the warriors who had arrived here with the Bloodclan group. No doubt dared to step into Runningwish's mind once she saw Squid bleeding heavily along her side.
"We intercepted them, but they had reinforcements. They're headed to the camp, Tiny sent me to warn you!" Squid admitted, her steps becoming more uneven, she was losing her balance from the blood loss. Snowpoppy came up and brought the she-cat away as Greystar stepped forward with Snowstrike at his side.
"You heard her, we're going to have a fight upon us-" He was interrupted as a screech was heard from beyond the fern wall. Only moments later did the entire camp become flooded with the attackers, most of which having gleaming pelts of fallen stars. Many didn't have time to think before they were tackled by these beasts, Runningwish was among those taken down in mere moments of

their arrival.
Those with the fire of a Starclan cat in their pelts did not get taken down, beginning to turn on the flood wave of intruders.
Runningwish had been taken down to the ground by a familiar white tom, a scar stretching the expanse of his pelt.
"I've been waiting to tear you apart since Mapleshade would talk down to me in your body!" He hissed at her, swinging a paw at her face at a diagonal angle. Runningwish couldn't dodge it, being forced to suffer the threatening blow. Her shock wore off quickly as her instinct to survive took over, adrenaline washing away her spiritual fatigue.
Even as blood began to find it's way out from the scratch, Runningwish began to growl at the dark forest cat. With a swift kick to his underbelly she had the tom flying off of her, but he wasn't ready to run yet. She flexed her claws as she bore her teeth, both of their faces scrunched up in warning.
Snowtuft charged at her first, forcing her to do the same. Once they collided Runningwish thrust herself to the side, allowing herself the availability of catching her claws in his side. When she turned back, she braced herself on her haunches, ready to leap again, her tail swaying behind her as she felt her muscles tense with the lust of battle.
Her ears, however, peaked slightly as she heard the roars of the war around them. She only allowed small glimpses to her side as she saw many other cats fighting their own dangerous battles. She breathed softly and slowly, allowing her gaze to return to her target.
She didn't want to risk seeing others fight incase any fell, she would hope others of her clan would think the same, their spirits needed to stay vibrant if they wanted to win. Snowtuft charged at her again, allowing Runningwish to pounce at him, this time catching her claw in his ear, tearing some of the flesh off of the top.
Snowtuft let out a short yelp of pain, possibly mingling with surprise, as he leaped away from her to get room between them.
Runningwish was prepared to counter him again, but she should have kept a closer eye on her surroundings, it was one thing to ignore her comrades battles, it was another to make sure another cat didn't get involved in your fight. She felt a heavy weight fall onto her spine as ginger claws swung at her face from behind her head. Runningwish dropped herself to the ground, doing her best to

roll to the side, kicking and spinning to escape from under her new opponent.
Once she did make her way out, she realized who it was, turning to face him, glaring daggers at the duo.
"Well, look what you caught for me, Snowtuft. A fortune teller. How lovely she is, too bad she smells too much like Thunderclan..." He growled at her. His smug eyes were green in color, his pelt painted with a deep ginger. She knew this tom from her visions and some of her nightmares.
"Thornleap..." She snarled.

Chapter 29

Runningwish let a growl grow in her throat.
"Two against one would be the way Dark Forest cats fight." Runningwish spat sourly, her fur on edge as she watched them both, denying her mind from slipping into anxiety and fear. She could only win the fight if she knew she would win. Thornleap returned her growl as he went into a stance for battle, pushing Snowtuft to the side.
"Fine then, since you're pretty, I'll keep the runt from the fight." He commented darkly, barking a command to Snowtuft. The fallen warrior glared menacingly at them both before disappearing. Runningwish felt a twinge of pity for the tom, he seemed to never be apart of anything. No wonder he became evil.
"Keep those eyes on me." Thornleap roared, rushing her as her last thought escaped her attention. She jerked her body to the side, barely avoiding the brute force of his charge. He snagged her leg, however, having gotten a bite and scratch on her hind leg. She hissed at the pain, but she quickly repositioned herself.
Thronleap was a misleading tom, his size making his speed unpredicted. But, she beat him before, she could do it again, even though Bramblefrost had really been the breadwinner in that fight. She shook the doubt from her mind.
Her green gaze turned on the ginger tom with a new fire in them, her body eager to rejoin the fray. Thornleap was preparing his next attack, pacing slowly back and forth in front of her, his fur also fluffed up, making him appear even larger. It intimidated her, of course, but she couldn't turn tail and run.
"Come on, Thornleap! Don't leave me waiting! I knew you were bad, but being rude is just awful." Runningwish jeered, mimicking his mockery of her before. If he wanted to battle with wits and claws, she would gladly oblige. He seemed annoyed by her comment, his eyes narrowing further than before. He had only seen this as a game, but now it was slowly becoming personal.
"I killed another smart mouth on my way over to you. Let's see how you fair." Thornleap retorted, thrusting himself at her once more, a large claw aimed straight for her.

°---°----------°---°
Squid was ferocious and wide eyed, paranoid that an attack was hiding just outside their peripheral. She was right to be worried, all of them were. She was among the mixture of Shadowclan and Thunderclan cats, completely lost among the conflict. She wasn't familiar with the scent of these other clans, too afraid to accidentally strike someone on her side.
She was just outside the medicine cat den, having forced Snowpoppy and Sunscar to stay inside. She had taken the duty of guarding it, or at least discouraging others from approaching. But, she was certain her bleeding side was not as intimidating as she could've been without it. She was generally small as well, which didn't help.
°---°----------°---°
Walt rushed into the camp, toppling over any cats that got in his way, doing his best to recognize those that were apart of Thunderclan or Shadowclan. It was easier for him than the other members of his clan, he had met both Runningwish and Cheetahstep, both seeming to have given him an idea what Thunderclan members smelled like, at least compared to the other cats of the lake.
He had come barreling into the camp in search of Squid, he was all too aware of her injuries. He had witnessed her being taken down by a large ginger tom. It had been apart of their surprise attack. The blue she-cat was small, but tough. She had nearly rivaled Gouge in combat prowess. It made sense, he realized, Gouge had been the one responsible for Squid's training. Taz had been close behind, his concern for the blue she-cat strongly apparent to everyone in their clan.
It only got worse when the attack began.
Walt had defeated three of the dark forest cats that had charged into the prototype of Bloodclan's camp before he took off to the Thunderclan camp. Tiny had retreated his group to the Windclan border to escape the first assault, sending Squid to warn Greystar as fast as possible.
And now he was here, having been pushed aside by Taz.
"I'll get her!" He yowled back to his clan mate as he charged through the crowd. Walt sighed with frustration, but kept his guard up. He spotted a few familiar cats in the crowd. There was one that made him pause.

The slender she-cat of brown stripes and green eyes was fighting against two toms, and she looked to be losing. Walt took off for her, pouncing onto the back of a large giner tom who had been facing off with her, the other large brown tom that had also been opposing took the chance to strike at the she-cat.
Runningwish hissed and did her best to dodge his attack, her hind leg seeming to be badly injured. She ended up being pinned by the larger tom, Walt digging his claws into the ginger tom as he watched, hanging on for dear life as he was being tossed around.
"Get away from him, Runningwish!" Walt roared, leaping from the orange tom onto the brown tom, both cats rolling away from their momentum. Runningwish gasped when the weight was removed from her and she turned, doing her best to flee, but there was no where to go.
She tried to push and shove through the other cats around them, it did nothing. She was too weak. Thornleap chuckled darkly behind her, beckoning the warrior to face him.
"You're my kill now." Thornleap snarled. Before he could leap at her with a finishing blow, a large brown pelt hurled itself at the Shadowclan warrior, pinning him.
"Tigertooth!" Runningwish yowled with realization. The tom turned to her, his pelt covered in mystic fire, gleaming in it's dark hue. His eyes glowed with a vicious yellow, his stripes ignited with anger.
"Get somewhere safe! This monster shall die!" Tigertooth roared at her. Runningwish couldn't make herself respond, afraid of both toms, finally breaking through the crowd to escape the confrontation.
°---°----------°---°
Walt rose, blood dripping from his muzzle. He had done it, at a cost. But, it was done. His combat rival was dead and he had won.
Walt had little time to reflect on his actions, his ears perking as he took off to find Runningwish. He was uncertain how he would react if he found her dead to that ginger tom. If only he had finished quicker!
He took on many other cats along the way, doing his best to aid anyone he could, glad he was being mostly ignored as everyone focused on their battles. Walt found no sign of the she-cat, no body, no scent. There were too many cats around him, there was too much blood to make out a trail.
All he could do was hope she survived. For now, he needed to see if

Squid was still breathing. He continued to push and shove, forcefully making his way through the crowd, finally arriving at the medicine cat den, the direction Taz had gone when they arrived. He froze at what he saw, taken back by the scene.
Taz stood over a tattered body- no, a corpse. His eyes were wild, teeth vicious. He was posed to obliterate the one responsible for the sin beneath him. The ferocity seemed to slack when Walt entered his vision, a glint of grief and relief sparkling in his eyes, but they were removed quickly.
Walt came over to him, not daring to ask what happened to their companion. This wasn't a simple battle, this was the first assault of war, and they would lose many more than just Squid. His heart hung heavy as he took up a defensive stance beside his friend.
"I'm with you." Walt said softly, making Taz's ear twitch.
"Thank you..." The black tom muttered.
°---°----------°---°
Runningwish had escaped into the nursery, the only place she could reach, the closest place to hide. Spottedlegs flinched at her arrival, a concerned gaze overcoming her.
"Runningwish, oh by Starclan, look at you!" Spottedlegs fretted, inspecting her leg and other wounds, although they were lesser injuries in comparison. Runningwish ignored her a moment, looking to the entrance, glad that there were about four warriors loyally protecting the den. She needed this sanctuary, having been allowed to pass into it without question from the other warriors.
She did not look well at all. Soon her adrenaline would lower and she would feel the true pain of her fight with Thornleap and Brokenleaf.
"I'm fine. I just needed somewhere to rest..." Runningwish said softly, breathless. She collapsed under her weight, exhaustion overwhelming her now due to having actually stopped moving. Spottedlegs watched helplessly, turning her eyes to the entrance with thoughts of her mate's safety on her mind.

Chapter 30

Voleeye watched as the Dark Forest cats were driven out, recognizing a few of the Shadowclan loyalists that fled with them. He had suffered a blow to his ear and chest, but he wasn't hindered too badly by it. He looked around, concern for his family swarming his mind.
Vineclaw, his father, was by the apprentice den, bringing Lionpelt to the medicine cat den. There was a large cut down his mother's face that made him cringe. He didn't see Goldensky or Sunscar, but he heard Spottedlegs calling for him. He turned to the nursery and ran to it, spotting his mate accompanied by an injured Runningwish.
"Are you alright?" He asked, looking over Spottedlegs. She nodded and glanced to Runningwish.
"But she isn't. You need to get her to Snowpoppy and Sunscar. Her leg is bad." Spottedlegs informed him, a concerned look in her eyes. He nodded, beginning to help her in assisting Runningwish to make her way to the medicine cat den.
"Thank you, Voleeye. Where is Sunscar and Goldensky?" Runningwish asked, her voice surprising her with how weak it seemed to sound, doing her best to stay off her hind leg, although it was easier to balance with a cat on each side of her. He shrugged, careful to not push against her too much with it.
"I don't know. I'm going to guess Sunscar was with Snowpoppy the whole time, Goldensky with Tigertooth? I'm sure they're both fine." He answered with some confidence, trying to keep up some optimism, purposefully not mentioning their injured mother. He glanced to his sister quickly, remembering her power. Had she seen a vision that had her worried? No, it wasn't for him to ask about... He turned his attention away, watching other injured cats gather at Snowpoppy's doorstep. It made a vicious fire grow in his chest. That was a horrible but brilliantly unexpected attack on them by Shadowclan.
Only thing that had hinted at it was Mapleshade's warning about Snowtuft. His whiskers twitched as a suspicion came to mind. Where was Mapleshade now? He glanced around a little too

frantically.
Voleeye wasn't sure if he was relieved or disappointed that Mapleshade was walking around the camp, helping the injured onto their feet to go to Snowpoppy. It seemed she was sincere in her change of heart. Even still, he refused to let her get him alone and hoped everyone else was equally cautious.
As they approached the den, dropping off Runningwish with the others gathered, he and Spottedlegs went around helping any who needed it as they waited. Voleeye, however, began to realize some were refusing to move. It took the aid of fellow warriors to help move all the injured closer to the medicine cat den.
But there were spirits of the Dark Forest who had been defeated, or else they wouldn't have retreated away as they did. They paid the price of this survival with their injuries, he was certain not many would be able to stand or hunt for some time.
One of the more infamous bodies found was Brokenleaf, the supposed right-hand of Thistlestar.
At first Voleeye didn't know how to react, it was a sense of awe that first overcame him. Someone had defeated the second in command of Thistlestar's campaign for power? As he stared with wide eyes and theories swimming through his mind, he was brought back to reality by an announcement from Greystar. Cats turned their heads and ears, their whiskers and tails twitching as he approached to be at the center of the crowd of injured cats. At first he looked around him as everyone waited in silence, some astounded by the bold display of motivation that glittered in his eyes, even after such an unexpected invasion. Each one of his clanmates seemed to connect eyes with Greystar as he looked over all of them. He slowed his peering eyes, his whiskers twitching exactly twice before he spoke as he continued to carry a powerful posture that seemed to leak strength to the cats before him.
"Our hearts are heavy, our pelts needing to be mended and cleaned..." He began, the crowd seemed to falter as they were reminded of the cost of this "victory", if it could be called that.
"But, this was not a defeat." He countered quickly, making heads raise once more to listen.
"Thunderclan.. Shadowclan.. and Bloodclan. We have survived this brutality from Thistlestar and her allies from the Dark Forest. We have lost some of our own blood, but please do not perish in despair..." He said, his voice seeming to grow stronger, its deep tone

turning passionate, "For the ones we once held dear are with us in spirit, we must never let darkness take over us as our enemy has, we must be different." Again, he took pause, his eyes slowly scanning the crowd, although he had stopped turning long ago. "We must seek a vengeance with a purpose, a will that is tamed so we may never repeat this cycle of bloodshed." He paused as he lowered himself to sit, the clan watching him, Voleeye finding himself desperately clinging to every word, feeling something begin to rise in his heart as he agreed with his leader.
"We will defeat them, for our hearts beat with a greater understanding and morality, to know one another as more than just clanmates, to see each other as more than just warriors, apprentices, medicine cats, and elders. Of blood, family, and friendship." He continued, "We are the protectors of our own livelihoods, of our homes. This forest is ours, this lake is ours, this land.. is ours. And no one, no matter how powerful they claim to be, shall take it from under us." He looked up to the sky, the sun having passed away from it's earlier position of noon, reminding a few others who looked up as well that dusk would be approaching soon.
"Starclan, even when we cannot see their army shimmering above us now, are watching us. They know we will win, and we cannot give up on our ancestors sacrifices." He slowly rose, "Let us stay silent in remembrance of those we have lost just for a few moments..." He said softly, his head bowing with his eyes shut. Most of the cats minicked him, bowing their heads, others looking to Starclan, or simply lowering their heads to the ground. The three clans, *together*, held a vigil for those who had given themselves to the price of *their* future.

Chapter 31

Sunscar hadn't seen anything like it, but then again, she had never had anything to compare it to. The devastation that was held in the air, the pinch of stolen pride, the iron grip of blood that refused to be ignored hanging in the oxygen she breathed now. It was almost as chocking as the humid air, mocked by the bright sunny day that came with the battle.
This was not Thunderclan, this was a clan that had lost the first battle. And it hurt.
It tore her to shreds to see her clan in such devastation, but she tried to ignore the negatives, after all, battles never ended with only positive effects. Her clan survived, her family survived. They lost a few, but it is better than losing most.
She had been sitting along the rim of the camp, watching on as those valuable few who had passed in the battle were being brought to the center of the camp to be mourned, to be remembered. Her heart wept for them, the face of misery on some of clanmates deeply distraught her. But others looked better, almost inspired, as if the next time another attack happened, they'd take as much from the enemy as they had taken from them.
Firestar sat beside her, still possessing Firesong's body.
"Thunderclan always recovers." Firestar said, also watching the clan from afar. Sunscar looked at him.
"We need a plan for next time. We don't know when they will return." She said, "We need to talk to the other leaders about this. Lionblaze and Jayfeather have gone to the other clans, surely they've won them over." Sunscar prompted. Firestar looked over at her.
"Firstly we must speak to Greystar about preparations for this war. Thunderclan is the only guaranteed clan as far as we know. I doubt Windclan and Riverclan would side with Thistlestar and Thistleclaw, but we cannot take that risk. They may have Dark Forest spies in those clans." He pointed out, getting up as he began to approach Greystar's den. Sunscar followed after him quickly, watching Greystar sit atop the High Ledge, watching his clan below.
°---°----------°---°

Tiny quietly entered the camp, the rest of his clanmates who had not gone to warn Thunderclan or join in the fray following behind him.
He refused to leave any of them at their makeshift camp.
Tiny saw them, Taz and Walt had Squid's body separate from the others, both mourning her death. His heart seemed a little heavier as he stared at them, his clanmates slowly entering behind him. Smear and Goddess staying close as he moved to approach, Tim and Sam sat by the entrance as Gouge jogged past them.
Tiny knew she would never say it aloud, but he knew Gouge was shaken by the sight. Gouge had practically adopted Squid when she had joined Bloodclan so many seasons ago. She had done her best, however, to separate them, thin their relationship, so neither would be in pain if this happened. But it was an illusion.
No one can lie to their heart.
The black she-cat slowed as she got closer, her short fur seeming to lose the gleam it once had.
Taz was the most disturbed by this loss, the sadness in his eyes was maddening, the emptiness that occupied him was concerning with its heavy presence. Tiny knew he and Squid were close, closer than close, but both had not expected life to end for Squid so early, to take all the opportunities they would have together, forever. He had planned to report to Greystar and discuss a plan, but his clanmates needed him.
And he could not insult Squid's memory by ignoring her loss.
As he got closer, Smear and Goddess sat alongside Taz, Smear murmuring words of comfort to the devastated tom. Tiny kept a small distance between him and Squid's body, pondering on what words he should say for her. How could Greystar do it so quickly?
He sighed softly and with regret. He had done this her, hadn't he? He was the one who sent her away, sent her to danger rather than keeping her in the safety of the clan... But he felt she was the best choice, out of all of them, she was the fastest, and was a runner after all...
He let his head bow slightly as he felt that small wave of sorrow pour over him like a heavy summer rain.
"Squid.. She was beloved.. She was inspiring, loving to those around her, eager to achieve and assist." He began, digging up all the complimenting words he could. His clanmates looked up at him, seeming a little surprised by his speech, he rarely gave them. But he

was learning from Greystar that the most powerful ability any leader has is using their words.
"Young and spirited. Those are the words I would describe her with, truthfully. Squid was one of our bests, and I... Can only say she did not deserve this death. But, we cannot regret her death, or else we serve to regret her life and all she did..." He continued, slowly allowing himself to get closer and taking a seat among his clan.
"She would've wanted us to remember her fondly, to keep her in our hearts so we never forget her, and to follow her life as an example of how to cherish everything around you, even in the darkest of times." He glanced to Taz.
"I hope we can all come to appreciate her sacrifice and know that it saved many others from her unfortunate fate. May her spirit rest in the stars above among those of these clans, so she may know peace and a life beyond this one..." Tiny slowly finished, closing his eyes as he lowered his head. The other cats did the same, slowly, as they all took a moment to remember the she-cat for her life, and not her death.
°---°----------°---°
Greystar slowly looked around his clan another time from the High Ledge, where he had retreated too after spending a while amongst his clanmates during the beginnings of their mourning.
Some had been lost... And possibly more would lose their lives as this war would inevitably continue. He had witnessed Tiny enter camp, and he had heard his words, feeling a small spark of pride in his chest that the tom had seemed to learn something from him about leadership.
But it disappeared as he returned his attention to more pressing matters. His clan needed a plan, for attack, for defense. For survival.
With the blow Shadowclan and the Dark Forest had dealt, they would surely come again, and perhaps even sooner than anyone could predict.
Firestar was coming to speak with him, he expected the others but Sunscar, Jayfeather, and Lionblaze had stayed among the clan.
"We need a plan, Firestar. We need to tell the other clans of this." Greystar began as Firestar made his way up the High Ledge, small stones breaking loose and falling below.
"Yes. Before we or one of them are made into the second target.. Unless Shadowclan and the Dark Forest have already attacked

another clan..." Firestar said, his steps slowing as he seemed to consider the idea.
Greystar looked to him.
"We need to unite, no matter what.. But we cannot meet at the island of the lake.. We would be a perfect target for attack.." Greystar said as he looked away, back across his clan as he pondered over the situation, and a resolution to solve it. Firestar watched him as well, slowly starting to pace.
"I will go to the other clans, they must know to trust me above anyone else... I will root out the spies and corruption of the other clans before they can be turned to their side. They would not turn on Starclan without a massive amount of persuasion.. Or threats.." He stopped pacing as he looked to the leader of Thunderclan.
"Keep Sunscar safe. She may be our final hope if we lose everything." And with those ominous words as his goodbye, and without listening to Greystar any longer, the flaming orange tom took off out of the camp, creating a plan for bringing the clans together, and plotting a counter assault to the Dark Forest.

Chapter 32

Runningwish was sitting outside the medicine cat den, her leg badly injured but she was fine regardless. Snowpoppy was dancing through the clan, her mouth full of herbs. She would grab a mass of one type of herb and give it to those who needed it, and once that was covered, she would move onto another herb to pass around. Runningwish wouldn't know if she'd called that a very effective strategy, but it was working for the most part, and currently Snowpoppy was only one medicine cat. Runningwish didn't know where Sunscar was, but then again she didn't have the ability to wander through the camp to look for her.
As the thought passed her mind, another golden she-cat appeared in her line of sight. Goldensky was making her way over to Runningwish, a look of great worry on her face.
"Runningwish!" She called out as she began to run to her sister. The brown she-cat blinked in surprise. Her and Goldensky had rarely spoken since her return, and with all the action she almost forgot her sister had even been in camp. Probably overshadowed by Tigertooth being the one to return with her.
The golden she-cat stopped in front of Runningwish, her large golden tail fluffed out, showing the scale of her concern for her sister.
"Are you alright? I overheard your leg was badly injured." She asked, her concern also showing in her voice. Runningwish did her best to act unphased by the injury.
"It isn't all that bad. Sunscar patched me up just enough to stop the bleeding, I'm waiting like all the others for Snowpoppy to deliver the next necessary herb." Runningwish replied, her voice a bit shallow, she was tired, it was hard to pretend she wasn't. It felt like all she could do was watch the clan and talk to Goldensky. She felt like her body was anchored to the ground by her leg, she had no choice but to sit and watch.
Goldensky nodded slowly at her sister's words, glancing about, seeing Snowpoppy weaving her way to one cat to another through all the injured.
The golden she-cats eyes squinted for a moment as a thought passed

through her mind.
"I could help her. I..." She hesitated and looked over at Runningwish. She leaned down and almost whispered.
"I don't get tired when the sun is up, remember?" She admitted.
Runningwish did remember that, When they were told by Leaffern seasons ago. The brown tabby glanced away frim her sister, looking to Snowpoppy once again.
"Well, there is no harm in asking her if you can help. I'm certain she would greatly appreciate it." Runningwish encouraged her sister as she looked back to her. Goldensky nodded a bit curtly as she decided what she was going to do. She looked back to Runningwish.
"Alright, I will help. Hopefully Sunscar returns from wherever she went to help too... I and Tigertooth are very worried about her." She said almost sadly, "She's been on my mind for quite some time..." Goldensky seemed to almost regretfully say. Runningwish watched her sister, her identical green eyes seeming to mimic that same level of loss and regret from the time they've spent apart.
She regretted not talking to her when she first came back, for practically ignoring her, her own sister, ever since her return.
She must've felt so alone, so cold without her family greeting her back into the fold. Voleeye had welcomed her, he had given her that attention, greeting her with the love of a sibling. Runningwish had failed her, caught up in her own world, distracted by Sunscar's future and her own.
It didn't help with the Mapleshade and Snowtuft situation, but she couldn't accept that as a reason to have abandoned her sister.
Runningwish nodded slowly, her sorrow shining through.
"Goldensky, I'm sorry. I was worried about you all the time when you left, I constantly worried, you were always on my mind.. But the moment I first met Sunscar.. When she was a kit so long ago.. I allowed you to slip from my mind. And when you returned, when I finally got to see you again, with or without Mapleshade and Snowtuft using us the way they did.. I failed at being your sister. I didn't treat you like family." Runningwish admitted, her heart heavy and her words cutting deeply. Goldensky looked to her with surprise and shock. How long had this been on her sister's mind? How much had this been weighing on her shoulders?
"Runningwish, please don't say those things to me.." She said quietly as she laid down in front of her, pressing their foreheads together. Runningwish found such comfort in that, the warmth of her sister

and the way her longer golden hair tickled her whiskers and nose.
"I have been the one running away. I have been hiding and staying silent when I had every ability to return and speak up and let myself be seen." She moved away slightly.
"But now we have the chance to be sisters again, to tell each other what has happened in our lives and what we missed and what we still want to experience. I love you, you will always be my family. Possessed or not." She said, trying to lightly joke at the end.
Runningwish allowed a small smile.
"I want that too. Please, when there is time, let's be sisters again, and tell each other everything." Runningwish requested of her.
Goldensky chuckled.
"I promise. But first, let me help Snowpoppy before she becomes one of the cats who needs herbs." She joked again, rising up from the ground and starting to prance off towards the preoccupied medicine cat. Runningwish watched from her spot, eager for that long talk with her sister that was equally long overdue.
°--°----------°--°
Walt had been sitting with the others for an hour or two. He didn't know how long, he was just guessing. The sun didn't seem like it moved much, his joints did ache a bit from the lack of movement. He had completed his time with her, at least he felt he did. He knew Squid well, but he wasn't as close to her as Taz and Gouge were.
He had another cat weighing deeply on his mind. Runningwish had been injured during her fight with Thornleap. He wanted to see her, know if she was doing alright. It didn't take him long to find her, she was really the only she-cat he recognized in the crowd. She was a bit off on her own, just enough to have her own space away from the others.
This was his chance to wander over and speak with her. He rose from his spot and headed over to her, stretching his legs as he did so. The light blue tom felt a small bit of nervousness creep into him. What did he have to be nervous about? He knew Runningwish well enough to speak with her.
As he got closer, Runningwish looked over at him, a smile appearing on her features. Her green eyes were hit by the sun at just the right angle that they looked ignited. It gave him pause as he looked at her, though he never stopped walking towards her. It was like his brain lost its train of thought when he saw her, looking at him like that.

"Hello, Walt." She greeted somewhat passively. He noted how tired she sounded, the energy clearly gone as he saw she seemed drained. It caused a small sting in his chest. He wish he had been able to protect her, he shouldn't have left her side like that, they would've worked better as a team. He sighed as he sat before her.
"I should apologize. I shouldn't have left you to fight Thornleap alone." He said as he looked from her face to her injured leg. She gave him a curious look, glancing at her own leg.
"No. You saved me, Walt. If you hadn't separated Brokenleaf from the fight, I would've walked away with something much worse than this." She reassured, slightly flexing her leg as she pointed it out, but she cringed at the pain it brought, slowly returning it to its previous position.
Walt wasn't convinced, even though she clearly didn't blame him for his failings. The blue tom sighed once more as he laid down before her, his ears laying low in regret.
"I could've still stayed by you to fight together..." He said.
Runningwish laughed at him quietly.
"Walt, please. You don't have to beat yourself up over it. You saved my life, you should be proud of that." She persisted. He raised his head, a bit of confusion on his face at her reply. She rose slightly and moved closer, pressing her head against his a bit to show some affection, leaning on him.
He stayed still as he watched her, a bit surprised by her movements. She looked at him with gratitude in her eyes.
"Thank you for saving me." She said sincerely. Walt could only resolve to nodding as he gazed at her as his fur grew hot.
"You're welcome." He said after a moment, it was all he could think to say. Runningwish chuckled at him before sighing and resting against him.
"If you want to make it up to me, serve as a nice place to rest while I recover." She said quietly as she closed her eyes. He smiled softly at her as she did so.
"I can accept that."

Chapter 33

Sunscar raised a curious and ultimately amused brow as she watched her aunt half-cuddle the Bloodclan cat across the camp. She had just returned to the inner walls of the camp after a chase with Firestar after the fleeing Shadowclan loyalists and Dark Forest spirits. The scene however left her mind nearly as soon as she turned away, spotting Snowpoppy and to her surprise, her own mother, drifting among the injured.

It was her duty as well, she reminded herself. Prophecies and destiny came second to her earthly responsibilities, at least for the moment. She trotted over to her mentor eagerly, almost relieved to only have to think of herbs and nothing else for the next few hours.

"Snowpoppy, I'm sorry! I was with Firestar to help track any remaining attackers in the woods. I'm here to help now. What do you need me to do? What have you done so far?" She asked, noticing her mentor carrying a bundle of dock leaves, and had remnants of cobwebs on her pelt. She truly did need her help right now, she had her paws full. Snowpoppy didn't hesitate to dish out instructions to her apprentice.

"I gave Goldensky goldenrod to give to those I have already given dock leaves to, would you be able to get whatever cobwebs I have in the den and follow after her? I can only carry so many herbs at once." She took a glance around, "It would be nice as well if Hawkpath could help, I haven't seen her, she might be in the nursery looking after Spottedlegs. Maybe you could check on her for me before you start?" Snowpoppy suggested alongside her orders, returning her attention to the warrior she was currently tending to, Mousepelt, who had a rather nasty scratch down the side of her shoulder. It was surely going to become a nasty scar on the she-cat's brown pelt. Sunscar softly smiled to herself as she could tell the warrior was trying not to make eye-contact, rather too proud for her own good.

Regardless, Sunscar nodded to Snowpoppy's orders.

"I'll go look for her now." She said as she began to walk away, taking one last glance towards her aunt. She chuckled lightly as she saw the she-cat still sitting closely with Walt. She sighed and continued on her way to the nursery.

Sunscar herself hadn't really ever spoken with the elder-once-medicine-cat, all she knew was she had a similar personality to Jayfeather, grumpy, but with a good heart. As she approached the nursery she did notice the warriors who were once there weren't guarding it any longer, it made her wonder if they also suffered injuries? More than likely.

The golden she-cat popped her head into the den and just as Snowpoppy predicted Hawkpath was in the nursery with Spottedlegs, and Voleeye. She wasn't entirely surprised to see her uncle inside the den, it was his mate after all. Just as she entered the retired medicine cat turned to her immediately, her large and fluffy tail almost hitting Sunscar across the face.

The apprentice was lucky though and Hawkpath realized who had entered the den before the tail made contact.

"Just you then? Good. Did Snowpoppy request my help? She will need it." Hawkpath guessed without letting Sunscar get a single word out, leaving the gold she-cat to simply nod in response. Spottedlegs and Voleeye greeted Sunscar as Hawkpath walked past her to aid the current medicine cat.

"I still can't believe the advantage our clan has, three medicine cats at the same time in our clan, even if one is technically out of commission." Spottedlegs chuckled to Sunscar, trying to start a small conversation. Voleeye nodded in agreement.

"As long as that means you're in the best hands." He said, brushing his cheek against his mates. Spottedlegs giggled at him, "You're such a softy." She teased. Sunscar rolled her eyes playfully.

"I'd assume then you two are fine? I'm going to go back out there and also help Snowpoppy, she has more than enough to deal with, even with the added help." Sunscar tried to say politely, it felt weird to walk in only to walk right back out. Spottedlegs smiled fondly at

her.

"Of course, we wouldn't want to keep our clan mates waiting." The older she-cat said, Voleeye nodding from beside her. Sunscar hastily returned the nod and waltz back into the camp, making her way over to the medicine cat den to get cobwebs like Snowpoppy asked. As she walked, she began to think about the current affairs, what was going to happen next?

She wasn't sure if her clan mates, the Shadowclan rebels, or even Bloodclan would want to try and stage a revenge assault against Shadowclan and the Dark Forest. It would be risky, with so many injured, perhaps buffing their defenses is what they would do now. What could she do during this time?

Sunscar remembered Firestar's words when they were returning with Lionblaze and Jayfeather from the other clans, he had told her she needed to select a champion, someone to take her place as the harbinger of Starclan. At least she guesses that was what he meant, maybe he just meant someone to replace her since she wasn't a warrior like her ancestors had hoped. But what was a champion?

She knew it would be one warrior, but what needed to matter for them to be her champion? What should she look for in them? Sunscar would assume it'd be whoever the greatest warrior of their clan, but Firestar would have told her outright if that was what she needed to do. But, he also didn't tell her much in the first place, she needed to ask more questions.

She reached the stairs of the den, glancing around to see that Hawkpath had taken over Snowpoppy's dock leaves, the white medicine cat approaching Sunscar.

"I'm just about to get the cobwebs, Snowpoppy. What are you looking for?" The golden she-cat inquired, starting her climb up to the den, a few stones slipping by and down to the camp floor. Snowpoppy smiled at her, "Well, Hawkpath demanded I take a break, but we both know that isn't what is best for the clan right now. I'm going to assort some herbs to pass out individually for the injured, something to help give them a boost. We're going to be very low on herbs after this, though." The white she-cat remarked,

glancing to the crowd, watching Goldensky make her way through with the bundle of goldenrod Snowpoppy had given her.

"I'd want to send you, since you're the only one other than me and Hawkpath who know the herbs, but I need you here too. I know Firestar has dragged you away from me as of late, but we really do need to go and forage for more as soon as possible." Snowpoppy continued, turning back to look at Sunscar, who was also watching her mother in the crowd.

"I'm glad you're back, too, you know." Snowpoppy said, still showing her soft smile. Sunscar took a moment to process her sentence, before smiling back.

"Yeah, it is good to be back, but I think it has given me even more to do. Can we talk inside while I grab the cobwebs? I think I can ask you for some advice about one of those things." Sunscar admitted, turning to walk into the medicine cat den, not aware at how much she missed the smells and tangs of the herbs inside the den, and it's less harsher lighting than the outside world. Snowpoppy followed closely, sparing no time to go to the storage and pull free a batch of cobwebs and some other herbs to build those personalized treatments.

"What is it that's on your mind?" Snowpoppy began, Sunscar helping find more cobwebs. She felt a bit shy to start off, where to even start off.

"Well, Firestar had told me when we were on our way back from looking into the other clans that apparently Starclan had wanted me to be a warrior, not a medicine cat. The way he makes it sound seems that I broke my own prophecy and it seemed to create a bit of drama for Starclan." Sunscar said, slowly sitting as she continued to talk, Snowpoppy listening as she started sorting herbs.

"And basically because of that, that is why the Starclan cats came down to help us, why Firestar is even here. And he told me that since I chose a different path, to make up for it, or I guess fill the hole I left behind, I need to choose someone worthy to.. I guess save the day?" Sunscar continued, her question making her ears flatten a bit as she was still kind of puzzled by what he had said. It wasn't

that she didn't understand what he meant, more so why did it matter?

Snowpoppy gave her a thoughtful look, her eyes slowly sliding away as she pondered a response.

"Well, it should be simple then? Finding a 'champion' to save the forest, why not pick one of the strongest warriors in the clan? Someone who has proven themselves, or does he have other intentions with the selection?" Snowpoppy asked, "Personally, Sunscar, I feel like that is a lot of pressure on a young cat like you. Why can't Firestar pick? He was apart of those who chose you to begin with right?" Snowpoppy pointed out, putting aside a pack of herbs she had made, starting on a new one. Sunscar paused, she hadn't even realized that before.

"You're right, maybe I should ask him, see why he wants me specifically to pick. I mean, do you really think I could make a better decision than THE Firestar?" Sunscar joked lightheartedly, earning a soft smile from Snowpoppy. The white she-cat shrugged in good humor.

"I've noticed with these things that usually when they intend to put it on someone else, it means that they are the right person for the job. Don't let others steer your choices Sunscar, if he wanted you to pick a champion, then it needs to be completely you who settles on them. I'd imagine you're wondering what to look for in said champion? I would think it needs to be what you believe is important to see in them." Snowpoppy said, glancing toward the entrance as a shadow blocked the small amount of light seeping in, Sunscar turning as well.

It was Hawkpath.

"I used the dock leaves you had, what's next?" The elder asked, eyeing Sunscar as she walked over, seeing the bundles.

"What are these?" She said, prodding it and eyeing the one Snowpoppy was still working on.

"Packs for the warriors, to help them get some energy and pain

relief." Snowpoppy explained. Hawkpath didn't looked impressed, which didn't surprise the other two she-cats in the den.

"You're gonna run the supply dry, Poppy. Look, I'll dispense whatever they need, but someone needs to go out and get started on replenishing." The ginger she-cat said, glancing at Sunscar rather pointedly. Snowpoppy nodded.

"Alright, I guess you're up Sunscar. Make sure to take a warrior with you, maybe even Firestar if he is around, just in case any come back or.. were hiding in the forest." Snowpoppy warned, taking a small glance to her old mentor. Sunscar nodded cheerily, "Will do." She said as she turned her back to them and left the den.

Now, to find Firestar to go herb-hunting, and to ask some well needed questions.

Chapter 34

Sunscar never found Firestar after she left the medicine cat den, searching and scouring the camp, but with no luck. She was starting to get worried about where the legendary Thunderclan leader from seasons past had run off to. She tried asking the warriors who were gathered around the medicine cat den if they had seen him, most of them being of no help, offering she go ask Greystar who had been perched on the High Ledge after his speech.

Sunscar took their advice as she did notice he was simply sitting there watching the clan lick their wounds. The golden medicine cat approached the High Ledge and called out to the grey tom.

"Greystar, have you seen Firestar? I have some very important questions to ask him. And some herbs to gather..." Sunscar muttered the last part to herself, knowing that if Hawkpath saw her asking around for Firestar outside she'd have her eyes burned into the back of her head. Greystar took a moment to respond, watching her as she climbed all the way up the High Ledge to him.

"He left a while ago, not long after you and the Bloodclan cats returned. He decided he needed to put the alliance with the other clans into motion as soon as possible. He ran out of camp before I could even say a word." The grey leader said with a somewhat annoyed sigh, turning his attention back to the crowd of warriors still gathered outside the medicine cat den. A few had broken away and began spreading around camp after receiving some form of treatment, looking to the fresh-kill pile for their dinners, which was making it dwindle fast. Maybe that was one of the things Greystar was keeping his eyes on.

Sunscar didn't think he would be very successful with refilling it, at least in finding enough warriors to go on a hunting patrol to replenish it. Most of the warriors all had injuries, though not all severe enough to keep them from hunting, but enough to make Snowpoppy fret over them opening their current wounds or even new ones. The she-cat sighed alongside her grey leader as she also

pondered what could be done about it.

Many of the Starclan infused cats were still in decent shape, but Sunscar feared they should rest for the sake of the bodies of the cats they hosted. Today was not a skirmish, it was a full battle, and they needed to respect it as such. Greystar turned to look at her, his eyes not losing the hopeful glimmer they always seemed to hold.

"What did you need Firestar for? Do you plan to chase after him?" He asked, his tail seeming to twitched, a clear sign he was eager for her to say the opposite. Sunscar shook her head, taking a glance to the medicine cat den, her paws feeling anxious to go and do as she promised with gathering herbs, with or without Firestar.

"No. Whatever it is he is doing, if he wanted me to be with him, he would've brought me along. I just had questions for him, he gave me... a tough decision. I-I have to go help replenish herbs for Snowpoppy and Hawkpath. They're waiting on me to resupply." She turned to go, but paused as a thought struck her. She had asked Snowpoppy for advice, but had never considered Greystar's opinion on the matter, he would have an unbiased and well informed opinion on every warrior in the clan. Maybe he could help her decide who to choose as her "champion".

Runningwish always seemed to look up to Greystar, telling her of a few times she had sought the leader out herself for advice. But for now, she needed to fulfill her medicine cat duties.

"Greystar, when I come back would I be able to talk to you? It's related to the tough decision Firestar left up to me. I... would like some advice, if that's alright.?" She asked sheepishly, realizing she hadn't really spoken to her leader except for this and maybe one other time The grey tom seemed to be surprised by the request, but also seeming to puff out his chest ever so slightly in pride of being asked in the first place.

"I would be honored, Sunscar. I hope I can be of help to this... tough decision, of yours." He seemed to say the last part with a bit of humor igniting his voice as he smiled at the much younger she-cat. Sunscar's tail curled in a pleased manner, smiling back at the tom.

"Thanks, Greystar, I appreciate it. Wish me luck on my herb hunt!" She called out behind her as she ran down the High Ledge to the fern entrance of camp. Greystar watched the young she-cat bound out of camp, her golden fur a blur, nearly looking the same as sunlight as it squeezed its way past the ferns. Sometimes he still wished he had that youthful energy to him.

He returned his attention back to the fresh-kill pile, Sunscar's earlier theories of what was on the leader's mind were quite precise. Who could he send out to hunt for the clan's dinners? He had resources, such as the Bloodclan cats and the Shadowclan Rebels, but he didn't know if he could ask that of them.

What if he offended the Shadowclan Rebels by asking them to do the hunting for his clan even when theirs suffered just as much? Bloodclan would be the easier choice, but they were a small group and were still in mourning over their fallen ally, the she-cat Squid. It would be wrong of him to ask more from them after all the aid they had offered, and the loyalty they had shown through their alliance.

Greystar would simply not move on his own moral ideals of respect with Thunderclan's two most inner allies. He would have to look inward to the clan and ask those who were still capable to attempt building a hunting patrol to gather food for those who could not. His amber eyes searched the crowd for his sister-turned-deputy, wondering if he could lean on her to help him pick those to send out, and soon.

He spotted the boldly white and black-striped she-cat among the crowd, her pelt ignited with small sparkling stars of the spirit possessing her, sitting alongside a few warriors and all the apprentices in the clan, seeming to be distracting them from the horrible conflict they had just lived through with much happier stories. The elders were also alongside her, probably helping add to the stories to continue giving the apprentices something else to think about other than the suffering that was brought upon their clan today. He sighed, a heavy breath filled with all the stress and exhaustion he had felt.

His shoulders were becoming heavier, and his leg was weakened

from the fighting, having luckily survived the attack from Shadowclan and the Dark Forest with a very minor leg injury. He was starting to suspect it was a sprain, but as long as he didn't stress his body too much, he would be just fine, and the medicine cats could focus on those who truly needed it. With his thoughts returning of how to solve the fresh-kill problem, he decided to put his leg to the test, slowly making his way down the High Ledge, nearly hobbling at a few intervals of the slope down.

Only a few warriors seemed to notice him as he reached the bottom, the senior warriors merely giving him a small bow of their heads in respect as he began to pass them, making his way to his sister. She was born of their mother's second litter, the litter after his, but now her mind was Snowfur's.

"Snowfur, may I bother you?" He asked as he got closer, beginning to stride with more confidence, mostly to hide his injury in front of so many of his clan mates, and the apprentices. He knew how important it was to always look your best in front of the next generation when you were a leader. Snowstrike's head swiveled to the side to look over at her brother.

"Of course, Greystar." She glanced back at the apprentices, "Amberfur and Dewnose will tell you the rest." She promised as she rose and followed after Greystar towards the warrior den. Greystar didn't want to make the trip all the way back over to the High Ledge or to his personal den, he figured the warriors den was far enough away to have the fresh-kill pile discussion with her.

When he stopped to turn back around to address her, he noticed her holding her left paw cautiously above the ground. Not even Snowfur could go hunting.

"I know you're not Snowstrike, but she was my deputy before our ancestors came to our aid. I need someone I can rely on, like I could on her. Is that alright, if you take on that role while you're... her?" Greystar questioned, not sure how to properly address her, he wasn't sure how to address any of the cats that were under possession in the camp. Snowfur seemed amused by this question as she gracefully sat down, trying to keep from having to balance on three legs instead of four.

"You may address me as Snowfur," She said, almost as if she could read his exact thoughts, "And yes, I understand our visit has caused a disruption in the flow of the clan. I can still speak for Snowstrike within our shared mind. She can see and hear you just as I do. I just have control over her body and voice." Snowfur explained gently, her demeanor a near opposite to Snowstrike's brash personality, though she did have compassion sprinkled in there somewhere. Greystar smiled with his approval, a great weight lifting from his shoulders and mind just from the idea of having a deputy at his side again.

"Well, Snowfur, first things first is I need to organize a hunting patrol to do a rather generous refill of the fresh-kill pile. I've already considered asking the Shadowclan Rebels and Bloodclan, but have decided against it. I have to rely on my warriors, at least those who are still fit enough to hunt." Geystar presented his situation to the white tabby she-cat. Snowfur took a moment to consider the scenario, glancing behind her towards the large crowd.

"There are a few who aren't nearly as injured as the worst of us, I can scout out a few warriors for a hunt. How many would you like?" She asked, looking back at him.

"At this point, as many as possible. We're going to have the entire clan to feed once that pile dries up, I need them to hunt three times as much as they usually do." Greystar explained, gesturing to the small pile with his tail, only a few mice and birds left in it. Snowfur looked over with him and seemed to almost cringe at the reality of how little the fresh-kill supply truly was.

"I understand your urgency, we have nearly fifty cats to feed now, those mice simply won't do. I will try to find warriors eager to hunt, but I will also ask the Shadowclan Rebels if there are any willing. A few of my fellow Starclan warriors are within their ranks, I'm sure I could recruit them if it is necessary." Snowfur said. Greystar tried to protest against this, having already decided he didn't want to seek out their help during all their equal injuries and burdens, but Snowfur gave him a look that silenced him before he could. He wondered if she learned that stern glare from his sister while sharing her body.

"We have to do whatever we can do, Greystar. And if you're so worried about offending them by asking, let someone who doesn't represent the entire clan ask them instead. They will understand, it may even aid to building a stronger loyalty. They will recognize you want to help provide for their people as well." Snowfur stated. "And, they must realize you may be their host, but you do not need to compromise your clan solely for their sake." She insisted, standing up, still holding up her injured paw. Greystar knew she was right, but sometimes his heart hung too heavy, and bled too easily.

"I understand, Snowfur. I appreciate your counsel... Fine, you may pursue the help of the Shadowclan warriors if you so please." The Thunderclan leader finally submitted to the Starclan she-cat. It was hard to argue against such an undeniable point over who should and shouldn't contribute among the two clans in this situation. His stomach felt like it held a heavy stone within it, maybe guilt or worry, Greystar didn't know which.

The enchanted she-cat bowed her head respectfully to him and turned away to make her way over to where Shadowclan Rebels had gathered by the medicine cat den. Swiftrise was the first to greet her, one of the few warriors who didn't suffer a punishing injury. Snowfur approached him first regardless of his greeting, she knew he was, at least for now, the makeshift leader of the band of Shadowclan cats.

"Hello... Snowfur, right?" He tried to remember her name even though he didn't even know the name of the she-cat the Starclan warrior was possessing. Snowfur smiled at him as she got closer, sitting in front of the brown tom.

"Hello Swiftrise. I have a question to ask that I am aware will be difficult for you to answer." She paused as Swiftrise's face shifted to curiosity, sitting down now as well.

"Greystar has tasked me with building hunting patrols to refill the fresh-kill pile, and I would like your help. Many Thunderclan warriors are too injured, so I need to reach out to your group for extra assistance." Snowfur explained, glancing over to the crowd of cats still surrounding the medicine cat den, as if to prove her point,

even though it was already apparent. Swiftrise nodded as he followed her gaze.

"Of course we will help. Shadowclan has been itching to prove ourselves and repay the debt to Thunderclan for allowing us into their home when we needed it." He looked back to the star-clad warrior.

"Not nearly as many of us were as injured as Thunderclan's warriors. We were... more familiar with the enemy, for better or for worse... I'll make two patrols and get back to you." Swiftrise promised as he turned away to do just that. Snowfur watched as the tom began calling upon his fellow warriors to volunteer for the hunting patrols. She couldn't help but wonder what kind of leader he would become when this was all over.